spare Rib

a women's liberation magazine
no. 77 december 78 35p

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Sterilisation - how, where and why

Asian girls at school

Fiction - (Un)True Romance

East London - National Health DisService

Robin Morgan: USA 4

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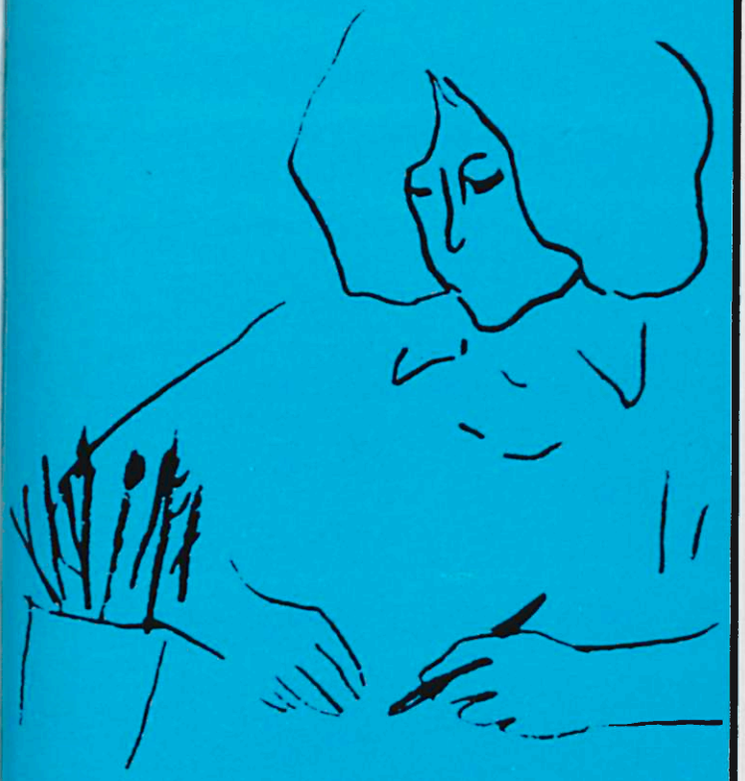

Who Writes Spare Rib?

Although *Spare Rib* is put together by a collective – that is, each issue is planned, designed, laid out, advertised, sent out on subscription, etc, by the women whose names appear in the bottom left hand corner of this page – the majority of long articles and reviews, and many of the news stories, are written by women who aren't on the collective. Some articles we set up, if we happen to know that certain women are interested or knowledgeable about a subject that people want to hear about; but many women suggest to us ideas for articles that they would like to write, or send us manuscripts, even though we can't afford to pay for any articles.

We always need more news reports and reviews from outside London, about anything being done by or to women in your area, and articles, especially about your ideas and your personal experiences – at work, in relationships, in the Women's Liberation Movement. What is easiest, both for the writer and the collective, is if you send us an outline of around 200 words of what you'd like to write before you write it – in case we've already set up an article on the same subject, for example. And it helps us enormously if you send articles on A4 size paper, clearly written (preferably typed) in black on white. *Spare Rib* doesn't usually have room to print features longer than 3000, or newsshorts or reviews of more than about 300 words – we wish we could afford twice the number of pages to be able to print more! But we don't make any cuts or changes in articles we print without talking them over thoroughly with the writer. And ideally we like to discuss with the author how the article, or fiction or poem, will look, what pictures and photos to use, because what something says and how it looks should combine to put across what the author means.

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Printed by Carlisle Web Offset Limited, Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle CA2 7NR. Typeset by Dark Moon (01-221 4331) and Bread 'n' Roses (01-485 4432). Distributed by Moore Harness Limited, 31 Corsica Street, London N5.
ISBN 0306 7971.

Letters

Is this the first time you've seen Spare Rib? Write and tell us what you think of it.

Spare Rib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT.

Trying to be a tree

*Dear *Spare Rib*,
How many more letters do you get which are written on Mondays? It was a good weekend and now the kids are back at school and the man has gone to work and I am left washing sheets in the bath and eating all the left overs and feeling, let's face it, "sorry for myself".

We moved here two months ago from London. It is beautiful and healthy and friendly and unpretentious – the people are like trees, they have their roots solidly planted in their own history. I love it and respect it, but it's probably part of my "problem". It's difficult to suddenly become a tree. Round here the ancient, gnarled socialists, who marched with Kier Hardie, wouldn't vote for a woman if she stood at any election.

While living in Hornsey I flirted with women's groups and gave the movement nominal if self satisfied support. But now I need you. I have always been a little nervous of the real hard-liners in the movement, because they tend to be impatient, even unintentionally arrogant (or maybe it's my touchy nature) with the doubting, the half-hearted, the uncertain – for all those who march unerringly into the promised land, aren't there just as many who could stumble in by accident if given a hand?
Best wishes,
Janet Fisher,
Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield.

Basically Non-Violent . . .

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
As a Probation Officer, I deal with 'flashers', and with this experience in mind I find Ms McCauley's piece in *SR 75* obnoxious. Whilst causing some inconvenience to the female public, they are basically non-violent, timorous people with a lot of problems. When they are locked up in an all macho prison they have a hard time from the other inmates, and seem to come out even more sad and fragmented.

I find that sections of the Women's Movement have accepted the "rapists are an extension of normal sexual behaviour" rhetoric for too long. I feel that the notion of psychological disorder has some application. Locking people up at best cools them out and at worst exacerbates aggressive impulses, and as feminists we should not forget that there are also important issues of human rights and forgiveness.
Yours in sisterhood,
Ruth Forrester,
Farnham, Surrey.

. . . Assaults

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
Hurray for Aileen McCauley! She's done what I've longed to do for years but lacked the guts. Next time I get flashed I pray I can remember her example and do likewise – I'm fed up with being liberal about sexual assaults of any kind.
Sue Davies,
Tunisia

Dear *Spare Rib*,
Congratulations on Aileen McCauley's article on self-defence when assaulted by flashers. It is part of the con inflicted on women to be told – implicitly or openly – that we must submit to sexual assault because the perpetrators are victims of the social structure or have unusual 'algorithms' in their brains.
Yours in sisterhood.
Brenda Able,
Croydon.

Holding on at school

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
An especially big 'thank-you' for the education issue and the poster.

Since I work as a teacher in a large comprehensive school I took the poster to work and tried to put it up. I met with flat refusals all round until eventually the deputy head (female) said I was being silly and of course I couldn't put it up. We didn't want children to think we supported "that sort of thing"! I could have put it up without the bottom section showing the addresses – they were all that was considered "offensive".

This ghastly episode is typical of the situation in this school, and, I suspect, many others, in which any right-wing or traditional viewpoint can be flaunted, but nothing else. The head even allowed SPUC to come and speak to the 6th form, but not the National Abortion Campaign!

All of the power within schools is wielded by a small, senior hierarchy, and since promotion is only available to those who loudly support their views, ordinary mortals like myself get no chance to influence the type of socialising effect that our schools have on children.

It is desperately hard to hang on to your principles against the petty, daily corrosion of the sort of conservatism found in schools, and so it is no wonder that 80% teachers give in and conform, at least from 9-4.

I have no answers to this problem, but once again 'thanks' for the emotional support of knowing I'm not the only person to feel this way.
Hilary North,
Colchester.

Getting Old?

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
The education issue has been very easy to sell – I've sold 30 in a week, including to teachers and parents, but unfortunately I haven't sold any to young women yet. (If there's anyone thinking of getting a few copies of *Spare Rib* to sell to friends, you should do. It's very easy to sell and a good way of getting to talk to people.)

I hope that the situation in other parts of the country isn't the same as it is in Liverpool, with few young women in the Women's Liberation Movement. There are a lot of women who've been committed to feminism for a long time, but very, very few new faces. And yet the youth movement seems stronger than it's ever been in this country. Who would've thought this time last year that there would be three enormous carnivals in 1978 with 80,000, 30,000 and 100,000 people, mainly young, enjoying themselves – and local carnivals running into thousands?

In Liverpool we have been talking about leafletting schools with a leaflet about sexism. Some of us also want to set up a women's group within the anti-fascist anti-racist movement which would tie in with this and find ways of getting girls and young women involved in the WLM. In the Women's Action Group we have talked about how much we can make our experiences of feminism available to a much wider audience. Some of us feel that we are a generation of feminists growing 'old' together.
In sisterhood,
Caroline,
Liverpool Women's Action Group

Labour's good for whose family?

Dear *Spare Rib*
In your news item on Callaghan's proposed 'minister for marriage' (*SR* 75) you discuss recent government emphases on the economic and social importance of the family. You go on to say that it is clear what kind of family they have in mind – i.e. the unbroken nuclear family. But you fail to mention that it is the *white* family that is being promoted in this way – as illustrated by the Labour Party's election poster which you describe. Labour is supposed to be 'good for us all', yet there are no black people in the poster. Recent government legislation and proposals show that in contrast to the white family black families are being threatened and attacked. For example, since 1968, children have only been admitted to Britain to join *both* parents, unless one parent can be shown to have 'sole responsibility' for the child's upbringing, and parent(s) have to prove that they have been financially supporting the child. The recent Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration have proposed that only children under 12 should be admitted to Britain to join their parents here, and the Tories have gone even further in suggesting that on 'social grounds' children should only be admitted if the are below school age. Meanwhile child benefits are not available to thousands of black women whose children are overseas, so that black parents are being denied the right to support their children. Wives and children trying to join men in Britain are being subjected to insulting interrogations, and sexual examinations, and are then frequently told that they are not the wives or the children of the men they want to join. Since March 1977, the new Immigration Rules on marriage have meant that they are subject to surveillance for 12 months to see whether they are 'genuine'. The attacks on 'arranged marriages' similarly have to be understood in the context of current racist ideology which assumes that there are too many black people in Britain and that millions more are trying to trick their way in.

Clearly for black people, family life is a luxury they are not entitled to. Feminists therefore cannot simply argue that "most marriages are better broken" (itself an arrogant statement) or discuss the "crumbling institution of the nuclear family" without taking account of racism. Indeed such analyses are themselves racist if they refuse to recognise that not all women are white.
North London Women Against Racism and Fascism.

It is vital to attack racism and the immigration laws and not to define 'family' too narrowly. While the effect of the racist

immigration laws is to divide many black families, this doesn't mean that white feminists should not question marriage and the nuclear family. It's like saying we should be grateful for the privilege of living that way because some people don't get the chance. That newsshort focused on the nuclear family because that is what the British Government is now promoting. But more could usefully be said about the implications of this "family initiative" for black people, and the information you give is really important.

Going off the tracks

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
Thanks for the poster, which I think is a good idea. However, I was very interested to see the stereotypes in the cartoon at the bottom. Viz. Only one woman in glasses, only one old woman, only three women with children. I am not sure that these images closely reflect the ordinary women of this country – to whom, I thought, you were appealing.

Also it does seem misleading to have the contraceptive slogan coming from the heads of two black women – this could be misconstrued by those who wish us harm.

On the magazine as a whole, I still love it and need it around, but I feel it has changed since I first took it. I now feel an outsider because I am not slim/full time into feminism/active on marches/a Londoner/somebody's lover.

I'd like to see more historical stuff and more long reports from abroad – I get the feeling increasingly that the magazine is getting more introspective and cliquey.

Sorry to be so negative, but . . . are we drifting apart?
Chris Johnstone,
Lumbertubs, Northampton.

Boyhating

Dear Feminists,
Do you hate us that much? Are you that jealous? Do comic strips showing girls beating up boys prove anything to you? (*SR* 75)

The World won't end if girls aren't allowed to play football, you should concentrate on getting women jobs, not bickering about sport. If you're complaining about sex magazines, go and buy a copy of Playgirl (full of pictures of nude men). Not all boys hate all girls. You're not feminists, you are men haters. Men aren't just a sex they're human too.
yours.
Nick Hayward, age 13
London N19.

Cute Sexism

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
Today I was in my local branch of Marks and Spencer and noticed to my disgust and anger that they are selling an apron with a 'cute' design on it: a caricature of a pretty little girl holding up a placard with the slogan "Down with women's lib" on it. I find this sort of thing totally childish and unnecessary, and I have written to Marks and Spencer to tell them so. I hope that anyone else who is disgusted as I am about it will also write and complain.
Nicky Reiss,
Oxford.

Judging facts for ourselves

Dear *Spare Rib*,
May I draw your attention to the need to quote sources in your News Shorts column when giving out 'snippets' of information. I refer to the coffee and tea item re the foetus and cows' milk. As a pregnant lady, much concerned about what damage she can do to her foetus by foods she eats and drinks, I was distressed to realise that I unwittingly might have done harm, even though I didn't drink coffee or tea until my fifth month. However, your reporting of the cows' milk item abated my fears, as this research I am familiar with. Firstly, I note that the surveys are limited surveys, and cows' milk is therefore *thought* to be a possible source of colic in young babies, and secondly, if the child is colicky, even though breast fed, it may well be the consumption of even *small* quantities of cows' milk by the mother not only large.

I do feel that when an item opens "Coffee and tea have just joined alcohol as beverages to be avoided during pregnancy . . ." it should be backed up by the relevant data – so we can judge the importance of the findings. After all, there is research showing that caffeine does *not* cross the placenta. In pregnancy one comes across all sorts of research, and one has to decide its worth, based on how the research was conducted, and therefore how applicable it can be to the general, and to humans. It is not for *Spare Rib* to trip out flippantly, as it reads, someone's recommendation as a do or don't, without giving us information which will enable *us* to be discerning.
Nina Dawes,
Rugeley, Staffs.

In future we'll be more careful about stating our sources and not drawing conclusions if we're not absolutely sure. In this case the main source was the Centre for Science in the Public Interest urging the US Government to warn pregnant women against caffeine. They quoted a study sponsored by a coffee industry group. In fact that study was misquoted – the newshort should have said that the equivalent of about 40 cups of coffee a day produces birth defects in rats.

Feeble Excuses

* Dear *Spare Rib*
To think that all this time I've believed *you* were to blame for my *SR* being so late! I had to put up with remarks from my newsagents' like "It's still on the late list – can't trust these women to get anything out on time" – very embarrassing as I didn't want to moan at you even though *SR* was often so late, not wanting to draw attention to 'your' inefficiency. As I then believed. And all along has it been WH Smiths plot against us all?
Love to you all,
Yolande Steger,
London N3.

Inspirational

* Dear *Spare Rib*,
Cheers for a great read – beats *Jackie* and the *Daily Mirror* any day.

I'm truly inspired by what I have read and only hope that one day I'll be able to contribute something towards the movement (heavy huh!). The whole magazine impressed upon me the importance of humour. It seems to me you lot must be fantastically strong but still capable of laughing.

I swear I'll have an annual subscription soon but being a poor working class school kid deep in hopeless debt I shall have to settle for just one copy for now.
Thanx and Bless you.
Jackie,
Carshalton, Surrey.

But too intellectual

Dear *Spare Rib*,
Please send a third year of *Spare Rib* I still enjoy it each month. Especially like the interviews and fiction and articles on health. Not so keen on the intellectual stuff, some contributors should realise not everyone has a PhD in sociology. Still, we can't all like the same.
Cheers,
Liz.

Pill Swopping

Dear *Spare Rib*,

In issue 75 you mentioned ASTMS's suggestion to its women Pill-taking members to change brands from the Wyeth-made types while the Union was in dispute with management. You called this a "novel sanction" I think it's *appalling* that women should be encouraged lightly to swop brands of a potentially dangerous drug in order to swing an industrial dispute. No Pill is *exactly* equivalent to another and all women are different and respond differently to the brands available. If a woman's found a Pill to suit her, she should stick with it. All Pill manufacturers are pretty horrible – Wyeth's crimes are merely a matter of degree.

ASTMS's idea seems to me an example of the patriarchal left sparring with the patriarchal right, while patriarchy's victims, women, are further messed around. I hope no woman takes up their suggestion.
In sisterhood,
Al Garthwaite, Leeds

Boring Course

*Dear *Spare Rib*,

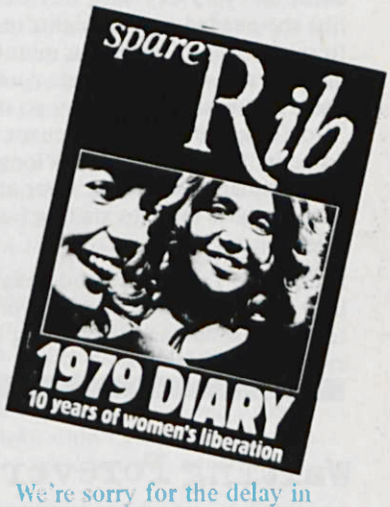
I am a two-year nursery nurse student and I whole-heartedly endorse the views in your frank and interesting article about nursery nurse courses.

I am a married woman with two children, yet one of my tutors can spend 1½ hours showing one group how to change a nappy! If any criticism is aimed at course content, it is dismissed with a cursory, "Oh you mature students always gripe and grumble", and no further discussion is made.

When trained we have no career structure like other professions, and I feel that until the whole system of training and staffing in childcare is drastically altered, we must carry on trying for change. Then perhaps we will stride out of college stimulated and caring people, and not as we are now, bored, jaded and constantly tipping our cap to the Almighty God, the NNEB. Perhaps you have set some people thinking.
Yours sincerely,
M. Chadwick, Shipley.

MORE LETTERS FROM NURSERY NURSES, page 46.

** Indicates letters have been cut.*



We're sorry for the delay in sending out the 1979 diaries, but because of the poor quality of the original cover and binding the printer chose to redo the work, which added two weeks to the delivery date. They're now ready.

Apologies! We misprinted Lesbian Link's phone number in *SR* 76. It is 061-273 3725.

Save t

We know that the Health Service is under attack all over the country, from our own experiences — longer queues, more medical mistakes, more harassed staff, less time in a hospital bed, more time looking after sick people at home. And East London is really in the front line. With some of the worst medical provision in England, the Area Health Authority proposes cutting a third of the area's hospital beds. A new hospital is due for the 1980s — work hasn't even begun on the site yet.

Bethnal Green has an extremely successful small hospital. Last autumn the Area Health Authority revealed their plan to close down all its general services, and convert the wards for geriatric patients. But the staff and local people had plans of their own. A campaign to Save the Green started right away, beginning with half-a-dozen staff and a local doctor, and growing by Christmas to a meeting of 700.

People are now occupying the hospital 24 hours a day to stop the conversion. Unlike the planners, most campaign members come from Bethnal Green itself. The staff are not only upset about their jobs, but about the decline of a community: "If I had to give up work tomorrow it wouldn't bother me. But I live in this area, I want to end my days here, and in the 30-odd years that I've lived here I've seen this borough go down". Women have been in a majority in the campaign. Six of them told Amanda Sebestyen their stories of organising.

SCOTTY	works in the hospital laundry, NUPE Shop Steward.
MYRNA SHAW	secretary of the Medical Postgraduate Department, NALGO Shop Steward.
MARJORIE CHESKIN	Sister-in-Charge of the Nurses' Home.
EILEEN	lives in the area.
ELIZABETH	works at the London Hospital, Whitechapel.
LYNNE	teacher, from the East London Women's Health Group.

Smaller is Better

There was David Ennals on the television saying that the very large hospitals are a mistake, "the 300 bedded hospital is the hospital of the future". Well, *this* is a 300 bedded hospital. And this is still — or was before they started running it down — a very busy little hospital. I find that the smaller a thing is, the better it runs, the far less expensive it is and a much better atmosphere there is for everyone to work in. *Marjorie Cheskin.*

When my Mum was in here, I used to come up every day with silly excuses like she needed a clean nightdress, just to see her for an extra ten minutes because she was very upset. And the sister knew, she used to say to me "Don't bother to make excuses, just come in, but don't stay too long." And in a big place, you can't. Over at the London, you stick to visiting hours. *Eileen.*

I think the London's a good example of how a large hospital doesn't work. It's too impersonal, and it's getting larger every day. *Elizabeth.*

Waiting Forever

It's true we're not technical like the London, but we take a lot of the strain off them — they had big waiting lists for orthopaedics and we were getting them done here within eight weeks. *Marjorie Cheskin:*

There's a woman came up to orthopaedics here and had to be sent over to the London. She's going to have to wait eleven months — that's just to see a doctor, not to get an operation done. *Lynne.*

At the moment there's no fracture clinic locally, there hasn't been for a long while. If you go down to Mile End they just X-Ray you and refer you to the London. My daughter hurt her arm on Tuesday, she was sent to hospital Wednesday morning and told it was nothing serious, but she'd chipped a bone or fractured her shoulder. We couldn't go up to the London hospital because it was turned twelve o'clock, so they strapped it up at Mile End and sent me on Thursday. Thursday they decided it didn't really need plastering, but then again the actual fracture doctor wasn't there, so I had to go back again on Monday. We sat there from about quarter to nine till about ten past eleven to see this doctor, and he said, "Oh, yes, yes. Yes, we'll leave it wrapped up as it is and we'll see you next week".

Running down the Area

They quote facts and figures, so many beds for so many people living here; but with all the wood factories in Hackney Road it's surprising how many people from outside come in from accidents at work. *Eileen.*

There's no argument for getting rid of this hospital on health grounds or anything else, it's purely money. This is exactly what the hospital administrator said to us when he was showing contractors around a ward. *Lynne.*

If they want to save money, how can they justify the conversion? Look at all the money they spent here recently on the operating theatre and orthopaedic. Seven or eight years ago, this hospital had everything. *Elizabeth.*

The children's ward went to Hackney Road, the Ear Nose and Throat went to St Leonards. They didn't go in one big lump, they went gradual, but you were always told that something better was going to be put in their place. *Marjorie Cheskin.*

The kitchens here were a showplace. People came from different hospitals all over England to see them, because they were a new design for the National Health Service. *Elizabeth.*

This laundry was going to be the group laundry. We have our own water supply here, we've got room for expansion too. Also we've got much better ventilation than the London will ever have. Am I angry that the laundry's going to be closed down? It's not *going* to be closed down. Because they'll close it down over my dead body. *Scotty*

The Old get Angry

This was a ten year plan, and the population was getting older. But things change in ten years. The immigrants aren't geriatric, the squatters aren't. *Marjorie Cheskin.*

We gave the elderly the dignity of being in a general hospital, we didn't stick them in an all-geriatric hospital without the facilities that they've got just as much right to as anyone else. *Myrna Shaw.*

To come out of one ghetto into another — the Area Health Authority aren't doing the old people a favour. *Scotty.*

We're going right back to the very days that this hospital was first built, as a workhouse. I find if you've got elderly people with young people, the young people tend to sort of take them under their wing. But when you separate old people from everyone else, then no-one can see what's going on. It just turns into a dump. *Marjorie Cheskin.*

The plan says geriatric for four years, and then closure. So where do people go next? And nobody's asked the old people around here if they want this all-geriatric. They don't. They support us. *Eileen.*

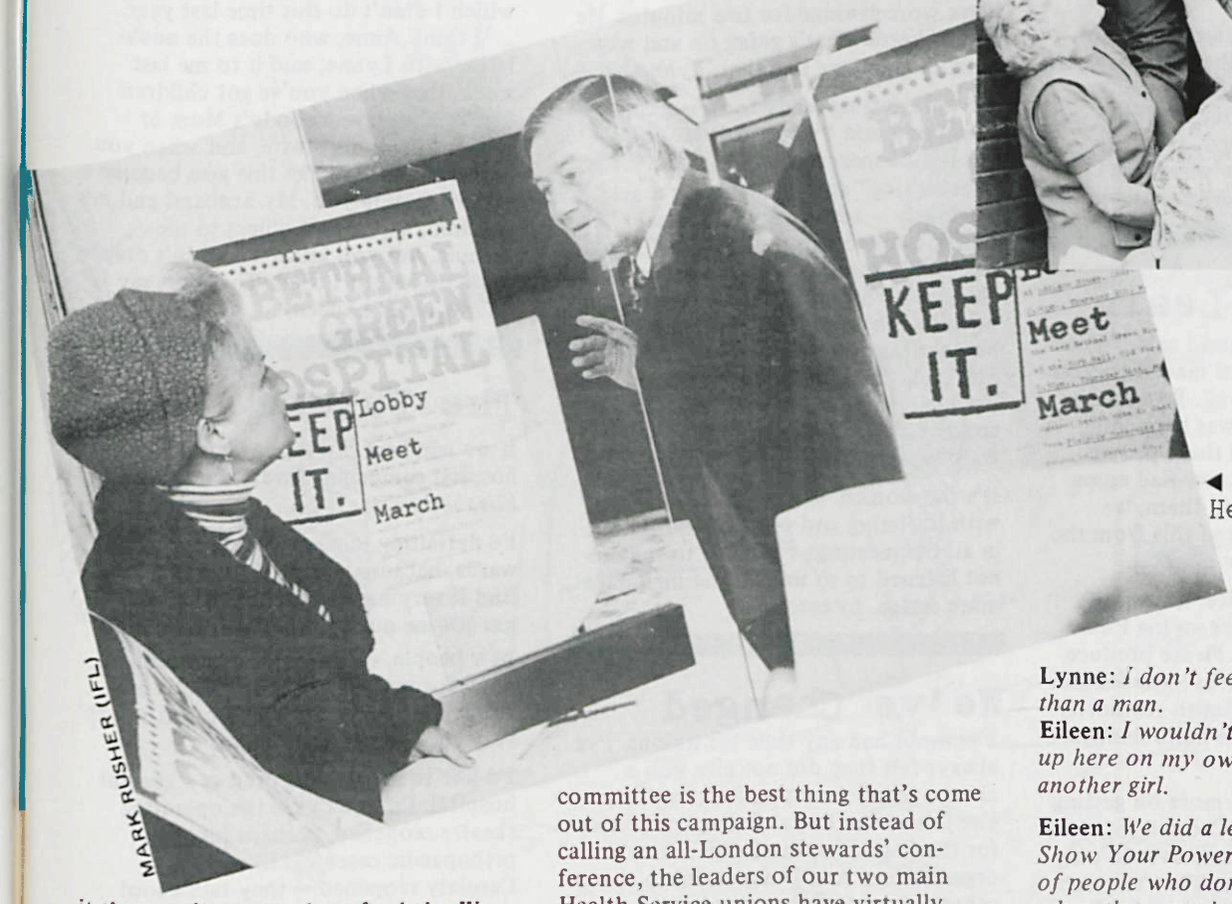
The Hackney Pensioners were the first on the scene with a letter of protest. *Myrna Shaw.*

For most of the elderly people around here, this IS their hospital and without

the Green

MARK RUSHER (IFL)

▲Heckling the Area Health Authority - "Come out, you miserable old gits!"



MARK RUSHER (IFL)

◀Health Minister Moyle meets a campaigner

it they can't go anywhere for help. We hired a coach for a pensioners' club to come and protest at the Area Health Authority, and they were terrific, singing and dancing and they all had banners. Someone lifted one lady up to the office windows and she was banging on them and saying "Come out here, you miserable old gits". And when the planners' cars drew up for the meeting, another lady was waving her stick in the air and saying "If I was younger I'd give you what for!" There were quite a few policemen up there as usual, and one of them said, "If you younger people were doing what these old ladies are doing, you'd be arrested". *Eileen.*

Fighting Back

Every time a ward gets emptied we padlock it up, to stop any conversions into geriatric. We've got 102 local GPs on our side; we have local residents picketing, and then the dustmen have been coming, and the brewers. *Scotty.*

I think the joint shop stewards' committee is the best thing that's come out of this campaign. But instead of calling an all-London stewards' conference, the leaders of our two main Health Service unions have virtually abandoned us. We think that in return for favours elsewhere they've agreed to keep quiet about our problems.

Four of us on our shop stewards' committee are ladies as opposed to one man. We've been very very active. *Myrna Shaw.*

Eileen: *The majority of the people who turn up for the rallies are women.*
Elizabeth: *I think it's because the men couldn't care where they go, it's the women that have to bring the children and things like that. One Saturday they were due to close Casualty, and we got some leaflets out very quick and went in at the pubs; "Oh yes, we'll be there" – and yet hardly any of them came, the men.*
Eileen: *It's nothing to do with the hours, because* I *work during the day.*
Lynne: *We all do. The only time it's more usually men on the picket is when they stay overnight.*
Elizabeth: *I think it's because they could probably cope better if there was any violence.*
Lynne: *I don't feel* I *could cope less than a man.*
Eileen: *I wouldn't be prepared to stay up here on my own, I would with another girl.*

Eileen: *We did a leaflet saying, "Mothers Show Your Power" because there's a lot of people who don't go to work and when they get given leaflets with "Go to your trades union, Do this and Do that" they feel they're not really involved because they're only a mother. The meeting was in a park which wasn't very dangerous for the road, and it was a time when the children were on holiday.*
Lynne: *A lot of women objected to it because they said they weren't* just *mothers, they were workers as well and they didn't like being defined like that.*
Eileen: *Nothing against people working, it was just to try and get some of the mothers who* didn't *go out to work to realise they could still do something.*

Another thing we did which I think was good, we asked five local schools if we could put out leaflets. And they all agreed, in fact they gave them out themselves.

In the summer we went to David Ennals' house, which was in a very small block of flats but it wasn't like our flats you know, the door was shut and a porter came out. *Rather* select. And there was all us people shouting "Up the Green, Up the Green!" and all these curtains were opening . . . And then we ▶

went to Downing Street which was also funny because there was a policeman with a walkie-talkie and as the 50 of us walked down towards him he started saying "Help, I need reinforcements, I've got a mob assembling!"

And then on the anniversary of the National Health Service there was a protest against the cuts organised country-wide by the Fight Back organisation. At nine o'clock you stood outside your own hospital and lit torches, but we turned ours into a singsong. We made our own up: "It's a long way to the London"! *Eileen.*

Some German people came the other night, and played with their banjos outside the hospital. I was so amazed I almost burst into tears because there was hardly anyone around, and here were these people all the way from Germany come to support us. *Lynne.*

Things to Learn

I stood up in the Park and I said, "You have got to go to council meetings. You have got to be seen there". Because the council knew that this was happening and didn't bother. If all these people who say they'll help us now had come to our aid when we asked them, we could possibly have halted this from the very beginning. *Marjorie Cheskin.*

At first we were a bit nice, like we wrote a lot of nice letters saying Please could you meet us, and Please produce this. We waited six months once for an answer from the Area Health Authority We could have been a bit more demanding. *Eileen.*

We should have worked more on getting the Community Health Council to support us, they only came over to our side when it was too late. They're essential for any hospital campaign, they've got the power to hold up closures and get a hearing from the Health Minister. *Lynne.*

You shouldn't just call round the local papers, it's the national press you've got to get to. *Elizabeth.*

To my mind the campaign hasn't involved enough of the ordinary staff in the hospital. I was talking to a Sister today, she said "The meetings have stopped, haven't they?" and I said "No – you should come along". No-one had actually asked her. *Lynne.*

The ancillary workers have been behind us and they've been coming to support meetings, but you can't have a very large committee. You only need one person from each department plus the doctors from outside. *Scotty.*

I think when you form a committee, you should include someone from outside, like an ordinary housewife. I brought my mother along to the first meeting and they said, "You shouldn't have. She's not on the committee." At the beginning they were keeping out the local people, though the attitude's changing. *Elizabeth.*

Male Chauvinist Pickets

While I was interviewing Eileen, Elizabeth and Lynne, one of the men on picket duty managed to come into the room FOUR TIMES with increasingly non-existent excuses.

That's just typical, that he couldn't leave women alone for five minutes. He had to know what's going on and why. Most of them are like that. *Lynne.*

We were getting ready for a march, and somebody said "What shall we do for our last banner, something that's really eyecatching" and immediately a man – obviously – turned round and said "I know, two women walk topless". Some body else who was there done her nut, she said "Why must it be women?" and he said "Oh, well, two men walk bottomless then – it was just a joke." She said, "It isn't a joke. We're discussing a campaign for equal people and straight away it's sensational if women walk topless." *Eileen.*

It's the women who are giving the lead with leafleting and practical things but in all the meetings I've been to they're not listened to so much. The men have more status. *Lynne.*

We've Changed

I've never had any time for unions. I've always felt they did not give you a chance to say how you feel; but now I've joined the Royal College of Nurses for the first time, that's the nurses' organisation. And I'm grateful to the other unions for what they're doing. But I've been a little bit dissatisfied because I thought there was far more unity than there actually is. You *could* make these unions work, but only if everybody was to play their part in them. *Marjorie Cheskin.*

My father came into this borough in the arms of his parents well over 80 years ago. He was always a very strong trades unionist, my brothers were always into the labour movement and I went in at 14. Then I dropped out when my children were born. Until this campaign started, being a shop steward was a very innocuous job, almost a toy job. Well, I rejoined the Labour Party on Sunday, despite what I've said about them. *Myrna Shaw.*

I feel I've become more tolerant of people's attitudes, understood that people can change and not to write them off if they seem conservative. *Lynne.*

If it hadn't been the Green, if it had been somewhere up North, I don't think I'd have done anything about it. I'd have just said "Terrible, the cuts". But because this is my local hospital, I've been surprised some of the things I've found myself doing. When we went up to Westminster, we were all militant. I would have thought, Oh David Ennals is a Minister, you can't really go up and see him. But it's your right to go there. Before the campaign I would never have dreamed of it. *Elizabeth.*

Up until I got involved with this, apart from going to work, that was it. I spent all the evenings indoors. I didn't belong to any clubs or evening classes. I come out two or three nights a week now, which I didn't do this time last year.

I think Anne, who does the newsletter with Lynne, said it to me last week, that when you've got children you're always somebody's Mum or your's somebody's wife, and when you come somewhere like this you become a person, you're you. My husband and my children, they don't object to me coming, but you know I couldn't drag them up here if I tried. They just say "Tara, Love". *Eileen.*

The Future

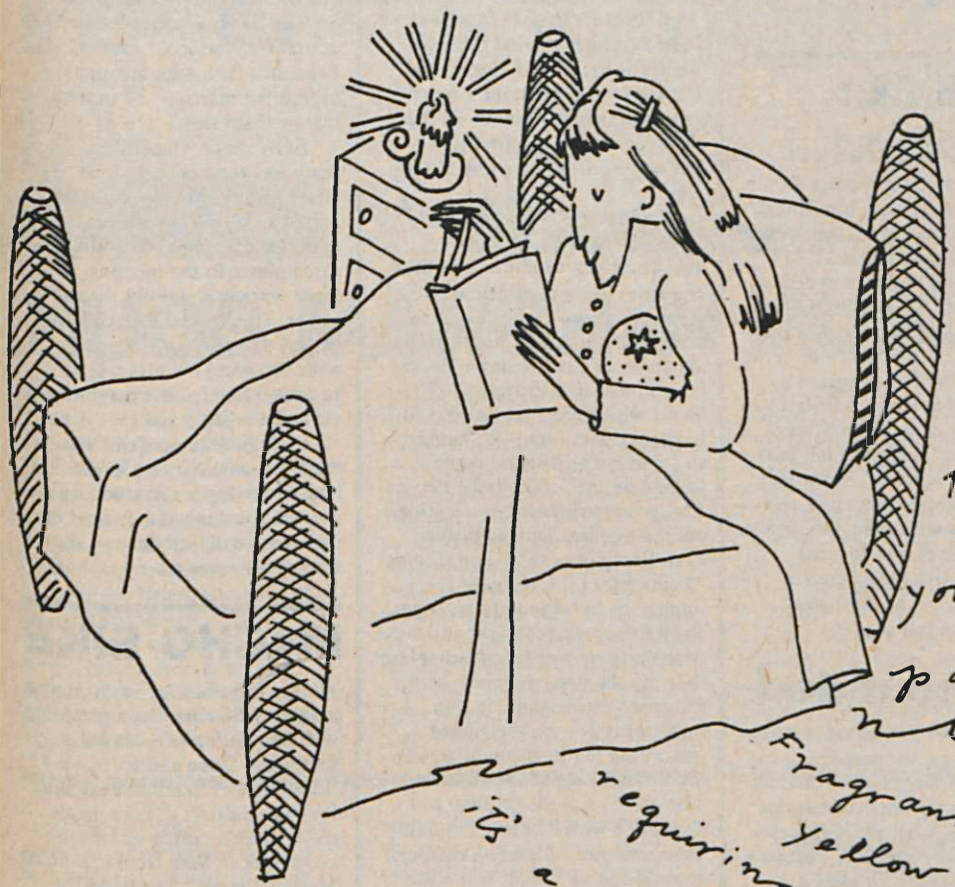
If we win here, I'd join another local hospital campaign, Save St Nick's. *Elizabeth.*

I'd definitely join something else afterwards, because now I've done this I'd find it very hard to just go back. This has got me out of the house, meeting new people, different people. It's been good for me, I don't know about me being good for the hospital but it's been very very good for me! *Eileen.*

I'd like to see this restored as a general hospital. I'd like to see the operating theatre reopened, perhaps just for orthopaedic cases. I'd like to see Casulaty reopened – they talk about the new accident and emergency unit at the London, but it's nowhere near ready yet. *Myrna Shaw.*

It's stalemate. We're stopping the conversion, but now the Area Health Authority are threatening people's jobs. But the staff are really angry because they know the conversion will lose jobs anyway. We're in a stronger position now as ancillary workers in the London and Mile End have promised to work to rule if management moves in. And recently we blocked the main road outside the hospital for twenty minutes to show our determination. *Lynne.*

The Area Health Authority have told us so many bloody lies they don't know which way to turn now. Apparently the Minister has called back the papers to look them over again because he hasn't got the truth from them. Personally myself I think it would be better if we could get an all-London stoppage over all the cuts in all the other hospitals. It's time we all stopped fighting our own little battles and joined together and made the biggest stink that anybody's ever heard. *Scotty.*



TO GRAPEFRUIT

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you could have a
grapefruit.
Try one, tucked in your arm
as
you read by candlelight
in
pajamas, late at
night!

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yellow & round,
requiring no feeds,
making no sound:
a pleasure to have
grapefruit around.

Thalia Doukas 78

'Grapefruit' is available as a postcard from Onlywomen Press, 232 Mare Street, London E8 - 40 pence for five. Also from A Woman's Place, 42 Earlham Street, London W1, @ 8pence.

Midwife on murder charge

Marianne Doshi, a lay midwife in San Luis Obispo, California, who attended the birth of a baby that died five days after delivery, has been indicted for second degree murder and for practising medicine without a licence.

Lay midwifery is illegal in California, and the California Medical Association opposes physicians attending home births, which for one thing threaten hospital profits. Doctors in San Luis Obispo (a small town between Los Angeles and San Francisco) refuse prenatal care and backup services for home births even in emergency. Two years ago they tried unsuccessfully to bring charges against the parents of a baby that died in a home delivery.

Christine and Bob Gannage asked Marianne Doshi to attend the birth of their third child, on June 3. The baby was not breathing when she was born, because of a knot in the umbilical cord. Marianne did mouth to mouth resusitation and hand-heart massage and the baby was rushed to a hospital, which admitted her but refused to take the mother. The baby was then flown to a hospital in San Francisco, 220 miles away, where it later died.

The investigation into her death was apparently initiated by the head of obstetrics and gynaecology at one of the two local hospitals threatened by the growing popularity of home birth.

Marianne was arrested and appeared in court on July 24. Though biased newspaper coverage must have turned many local people against Marianne and alternative health care in general, the courtroom was packed with her supporters. She'll need more support – preliminary hearings are in October and the trial starts in December.○

Please send donations and messages of support to Marianne Doshi Defence Committee, PO Box 522, San Luis Obispo, California 93406.

564 SISTERS

The *New York Times* has been taken to court by no less than 564 women employees for systematically discriminating against women in all jobs – printing, reporting, editing and office jobs – in appointments, promotions and wages. Ironically, the *New York Times* believes itself to be the liberal conscience of America, and editorials have even come out in favour of positive discrimination for women and blacks .... elsewhere, obviously. The paper has now settled out of court, guaranteeing that women will eventually fill at least a quarter of all senior editing jobs, 30% of reporting staff, and giving the women from 100 to 2000 dollars each.

Such "class action suits", where people can sue on behalf of all of a particular group – in this case women – are proving very effective in the US. At the *NY Times* the women were united in pushing the action through to the end, and between them found an extraordinary amount of evidence against the paper. In Britain most women have to take their complaint to industrial tribunal on their own.○

GREECE: Drafted...

Military service for women in Greece has now been introduced (see SR 71). A woman interviewed in a Greek newspaper said, "I know I would make an excellent officer. When I was a child, I used to hit and bully all the children in the neighbourhood." The Athens Women's Liberation Movement has issued a leaflet to counter the army's recruitment propaganda: "Let's not fall into the trap of 'equality'. We women can fight like the men, but only if the war is worthwhile. A war to better our lives, for our real liberation. Not one where we serve the bosses by becoming their cannon fodder."○

and hounded

The Greek government is currently discussing a bill purporting to regulate the spread of VD but in fact threatening both prostitutes and gay men, who are both defined as 'indecent persons'. Lesbians are not recognised to exist in Greece. Women prostitutes will be required to register with the police and undergo medical examinations twice weekly; soliciting will be punishable by one year's imprisonment.

Male homosexuals will be subject to the same penalty, plus compulsory therapy if convicted of cruising in "streets, squares, public centres.....with the evident purpose of attracting men to perform on them sexual activities lewd and against nature". The bill is worded in such a way as to confuse homosexuality with prostitution and to project homosexuality as a medical threat to society as well as a moral one.

The newly formed Greek Gay Liberation Movement, AKOE, has organised a campaign against the bill but so far the press has been vicious and the left political parties either silent or hostile. International solidarity is essential, and may have quite a strong effect on the government's decision, since their major aim at the moment is to get Greece into the EEC. Greek embassies in several European countries including Britain were picketed on September 30 in an international day of action against the bill.○

Lucy Whitman

A FEMINIST PARTY FOR EUROPE?

A while ago *Spare Rib* was sent a circular letter with the heading "June 1979: European Parliament Elections – European Feminists, Join Ranks With Us". 'Us' is the Parti Feministe Unifie (United Feminist Party) of Belgium and Choisir (to choose), the French women's organisation which has campaigned for changes in the law on abortion, rape and battering.

To that end, both organisations put up a number of parliamentary candidates at their countries' general elections. Now we are presented with the European Parliament, the political appendix of the Common Market (you know, that European CBI, about which there was such a fuss some five years ago – something to do with the British people joining or not!). Mid-1979 the European parliamentary elections are taking place, and both the Parti Feministe Unifie and Choisir "believe that it is advisable and important to begin with an appeal to all European feminists desirous of making women heard otherwise than via the male members of the European Parliament, to join ranks with us with the aim of presenting feminist candidates in the Community of the Nine . . ." The election platform they put forward covers 1. The economic independence of women (through sharing waged as well as household work); 2. The right to physical self-determination (by acknowledging women's right to pleasure, and her right to control her fertility, and by making rape a crime); 3. A new image of woman in informative and educative media (anti-sexist law, anti-sexist committees on all levels); 4. The promotion of peace.

This, they say, is the "expression of the fundamental and universal principles of feminism". I'm not so sure of that. . . For many women feminism means creating a totally new order, new ways of thinking and being. It would be laughable to imagine we can do it through a male mind-fuck like the European Parliament. Okay let's use the elections to talk about what we want, let's get all we can from their legal system and lick our wounds for a while, but let's not forget that we're playing ball in the jaws of a monster. . .○

Anny Brackx

If you're interested contact Parti Feministe Unifie, Rue des Aduatiques 74, 1040 Bruxelles, Belgique, or let us know what you think.

Throwing Pies

In Queensland, Australia, all political marches are banned – in other states it's just being made increasingly difficult for feminists and gays to march. The latest incidents:

The Festival of Light held an anti-abortion rally in Sydney, New South Wales, in August. 400 gay activists marched on the footpaths attempting to reach a protest rally, but were surrounded and indiscriminately arrested.

The Sydney police banned a march for National Lesbian Independence Day until the night before the march – 50 women marched anyway.

In Brisbane, Queensland, feminists got tickets to hear Mary Whitehouse by posing as baptists. Though bags were searched by police, they still got three pies into the meeting, and these were successfully thrown at her. The Special Branch has vowed that the eight charged with throwing the pies will go to prison for it – the maximum sentence is five years.

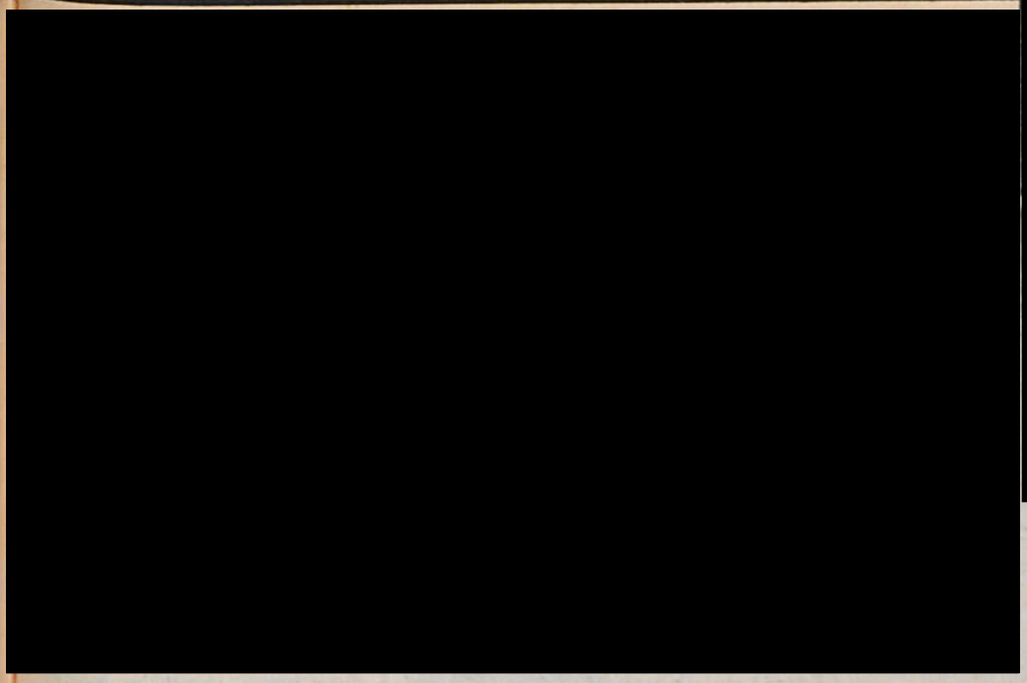
In Sydney, more feminists managed to slip into a Whitehouse meeting – ten stood up as she was speaking and opened up umbrellas with lesbian and abortion slogans painted on them.○

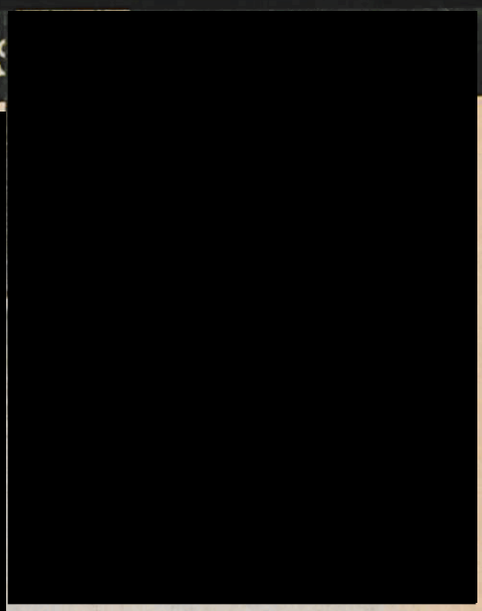
MACHO BIKE

That worthy but furiously macho magazine *Bike* has been grappling with the notion of – da da! – feminism! Since a letter in *SR* 73 from Carolyn Skelton, criticising the male cultism of bike magazines, there's been a smart-ass comeback in *Bike* from columnist Mark Williams: "The badge of feminism you wear so proudly (and loudly) tends to confuse a lot of us lads who, believe it or not, are right behind you in your efforts to redress the balance of sexism. We find it a little odd that you should call yourselves feminists yet eschew most of the womanly things we find attractive. Hell, a lot of you seem to be chucking away your make-up, your pretty clothes and your tenderness in a determined effort to repel us." He then challenges Carolyn to some kind of duel with his new heroine Jane Gaskill who is "quite apart from her Amazonian frame, a stunning looker". Unlike "fervid young feminist" Skelton and "worthy but furiously feminist *Spare Rib*" who are of course frumpish, boring etc.

Someone called Alison has a nice "We're Here" letter in September *Bike*: "So you've noticed that women bikers exist. Congratulations. Now could Mark Williams get it into his head that not only do we ride bikes but we also read. So how come he writes

DEREK SPEIRS (IFL)





HUGE MARCH IN DUBLIN

Five thousand women flooded through Dublin on the evening of October 13, protesting against rape and all sexual harassment of women. "We expected a few hundred, maybe a thousand. When we saw so many in St Stephen's Green it was overwhelming," says Catherine O'Brien, who helped organise the march. "The feeling of solidarity was fantastic. When we passed the Rotunda, a big maternity hospital on O'Connell Street, all the windows were lit up and women were waving."

The march – far bigger than any women-only march we've ever had in Britain – was organised by women planning to start a Rape Crisis Centre in Dublin, with help from individuals. They put posters everywhere and got excellent advance publicity on the radio and in the papers. They canvassed everyone they knew and got women prominent in political parties, trade unions, journalism and traditional women's organisations to sign a statement of support. "We decided to get the widest support we could," says Catherine, "and all kinds of women turned up, schoolgirls, housewives from a vast radius round Dublin."

At the rally Nell McCafferty, (ex-*Irish Times*) said, "There isn't a woman on this march who hasn't been abused physically or mentally. Every woman has been raped in thought, word or deed... The streets are ours. We are not looking for jail for men, we are not looking for castration for men, we are not looking for men at all."

A woman speaking for the Rape Crisis Centre said they wanted a change in the laws of evidence so that a woman's sexual history is not brought out in court to be used against her.

The Rape Crisis Committee are now preparing a report and hope to get the centre going by Christmas. The march was an immense show of potential, and very significant as a consciousness raiser in building the women's movement in Ireland.○

★ For Glasgow Women's Liberation the first week in October was a week of action against rape. First they handed out about 4,500 leaflets in town; later they picketed a porno cinema, held a public meeting and a 'Reclaim the Night' march with about 100 women. This was the first women-only march ever held in Glasgow.

'explaining' women bikers to his readers as if all those readers are men? I don't wish to know that women bikers are okay if the they are 'slender and henna-haired' and meet your standards of beauty. I don't notice you encouraging male bikers to make themselves more glamorous. Most of the paunchy, straggle-locked men bikers around don't meet my standards of beauty but that's okay with me."

So November *Bike* comes up with what Carolyn thinks is its first girlie pictures page – "some sights that would gladden any biker's eyes" at the Earls Court Show. Two "young ladies" in stiletto heels and G-strings astride a Honda 900FZ, etc. *Any* biker's eyes?○

On Yer Bike! *is a new radical motorcycle mag — 45p from 30 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.*

Porn Picket

Angry at the ever increasing amount of porn on display, we decided to picket Martin's, a 'respectable' chain of newsagents with a lot of porn on its shelves. We wrote a leaflet, made placards, one with two revolting centre-spreads and the words "Is this how your man sees you?" and had a petition for women to sign.

We set up outside their shop in Wandsworth, London but were moved on by the shopping centre manager – apparently precincts are private property, and there is no automatic right to picket. Undeterred, we continued at one of the entrances to the centre. The response we got from women was wonderful! It was raining, but women stopped, put down their heavy bags, talked and signed the petition. Many were surprised and horrified to hear that Martin's were selling porn. We collected 190 signatures in an hour and a half.

It would be good to see this sort of action happening more as there is so much support on this issue from women outside the movement. From our experience it would seem a good idea to have a prominent placard saying "Sign our petition AGAINST porn" to avoid any confusion! ○ **Sarah Mosedale, Siva Rosachilli and others**

EVENING NEWS LET OFF

Artificial insemination now seems to be more or less permanently in the news. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service has set up a national network of AID clinics for single and married women. It will cost £20 for counselling, followed by £30 for a three month trial and £10 for subsequent tries. Meanwhile the British Medical Association's Ethics Committee has decided it's OK for doctors to co-operate, if they are satisfied they are acting in the best interests of the mother and child-to-be.

The bad news prize goes to the Press Council, who have passed two totally contradictory judgements in the last few weeks. By twisting their necks painfully, they managed not to see that the *Evening News* had invaded the privacy of the AID lesbian mothers, even though the *Evening News* openly admitted they gained the story by deception (*SR* 67 and 68). The justification for the 'dirty tricks' was ..... that the paper couldn't have got their information about AID any other way than by lying and pretence – such information was in fact readily available in several articles in *Sappho* magazine, as Jackie Forster and Nikki Henriques had already told them. The Press Council also rejected any idea of discrimination against lesbian mothers (despite the "Ban These Babies" headlines) – it was "a matter which the public was entitled to hear about and discuss".

Meanwhile they gave a judgement *against* the *Guardian* journalist, Jill Tweedie, because she'd left someone's surname on a letter she'd published, although the writer had asked for anonymity. Jill Tweedie had changed the first name, and the address; she had also altered the contents of the letter to make the anecdote untraceable. But leaving on the surname shocked the Press Council deeply. It was "totally unjustified and reprehensible, calculated to cause embarrassment to Mrs Smythe". What's reprehensible in one case, it seems, is fair game in another.○

Susan Hemmings

Policing the family

"The family is the most cost-effective system for fostering and sustaining children's healthy development. The potential collapse of effective child care through families may well be the most insidious of the cancers within our society." This was the stark warning given by Professor Richard Whitfield, at a recent conference on "Family Life" held by the National Children's Home, to 500 delegates from churches, social services, voluntary bodies, police forces etc.

Whitfield's answer to the problem was to encourage the teaching of "Preparation for Parenthood" courses in schools and on TV. Someone asked how a realistic picture of what life was like with small children could be given to young people without putting them off altogether! Although he replied that "every child should be a wanted child", the notion that some people might choose to be childless was never given serious consideration. The only mention of abortion was alongside figures for truancy and delinquency, whereas contraception did not feature till the final five minutes of the conference, when a desperate resolution was proposed by a man from Doncaster, censuring the DHSS for giving contraceptives to under-16s without their parents' consent.

The speakers never tired of affirming their commitment to the family as the basis for a healthy stable society, and although Dr Muriel Brown from the London School of Economics gallantly included in her definition one-parent families, families of 'multiple cohabitation', families of various races and creeds, all of which "sustain a rich diversity in the style of family living", no single parent was invited to speak, and there did not seem to be even one delegate from the black communities.

Muriel Brown's main demand was for much more money to be spent on income maintenance, related to the real cost of bringing up children, which as she rightly pointed out is miserably underestimated at present. She also advocated the setting up of a Family Commission to assess the impact of government policies on families. (In most of what she said though, the word "people" might just as well have been substituted for "families". Or am I a one-person family?)

JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)

Patrick Jenkin smirks reassuringly at police chief Jack Anderton

When Patrick Jenkin, Opposition spokesperson on the Social Services, said he thought a public department for the Family would undermine "the competence and the confidence of the great majority of families to live their lives in a way which, because it is self-reliant, is truly satisfying", Dr Brown retorted that *poverty* undermines people's competence and confidence much more. Jenkin also criticised the tax system for positively encouraging "young mothers to work when perhaps they would be better caring for their children in those vital early formative years".

At this Yvonne Beecham from Camden Women's Aid stood up to protest against all the emphasis being on putting women back in the home, and to ask why there had been no mention of nursery provision. Later on David Ennals (Secretary of State for Social Services) did mutter something about the excellent TUC proposals for facilities for the under-5s, but only to lament that "resource constraints" would once again delay the implementation of these plans.

In the afternoon the speeches must stop making excuses for bad parents and set about re-educating them. We must force them, as far as is reasonably possible, to face up to their personal responsibilities and penalise them in some way if they won't. But how can we instil a proper sense of duty in parents when morality is now a dirty word; when authority in every form is attacked from every side?" whispered the strong, reassuring voice of James Anderton, Chief Constable of Manchester, to a storm of applause.

What's a policeman doing at a conference on family life, you might ask. But Anderton is no common or garden policeman. He's the one who used a legal technicality to prohibit the use of menstrual extraction for early safe abortion at Tameside Hospital; whose officers have been conducting a systematic attack on gays and gay clubs in the area – threatening them with the obsolete "licentious dancing" bye-law. He was also responsible for doing a deal with the National Front last year, which diverted anti-fascists to Stockport while 9,500 policemen protected the NF march in Levenshulme, and 500 more guarded Martin Webster on his solitary march through Hyde. "Liberalised democratic freedom has taken a very peculiar turn to the detriment of our society", he told the Family Life conference. How *right* he is. His manner is calm, but his words are manic; his categories of problem parents include "feckless, drink-sodden and dirty" ones, and "hedonistic parents with laissez-faire attitudes towards divorce, sex, abortion and morality".

This conference must be seen as part of the growing movement to reinforce traditional life styles. But it's a measure of the threat posed by the women's movement that such a conference had to be called in the first place. O

Lucy Whitman

Do you wanna know a secret?

Two journalists and an ex-soldier are on trial at the Old Bailey charged with contravening the Official Secrets Act by arranging and carrying out an interview about the Army's Signals Intelligence operations. The heaviest charges have now been dropped but they still face charges under Section 2 of the Act, for the giving and receiving of unauthorised information (penalty up to two years).

Such charges can seem distant from our lives, but there was one recent case where the significance of 'official secrecy' for women was very clear. Pat Healey, a *Times* journalist, explains what happened over the child benefits leak.

On November 13, child benefit rates will go up to £3 per child per week, and £5 for the first child in one parent families. Next April, another £1 will be added to both rates. This is still far from the level expected when the Child Benefit Act became law in 1975, but considerably better than seemed likely in spring 1976.

Then, the Government came close to dropping the child benefit scheme altogether, having returned its chief progenitor Barbara Castle to the back benches. It was only because people in a position to know began leaking the news that any scheme got off the ground at all.

The first leak that reached me was made at a private dinner attended by a number of social policy journalists. We could not believe that the Government could even consider abandoning the scheme. But assiduous digging confirmed that something nasty was going on.

My first article in *The Times* suggesting that the Government was about to renege on the full child benefit scheme had two effects. First, all my sources dried up so abruptly that it was clear that it was accurate. Secondly, Labour backbenchers were alerted – but they too found it so unbelievable that they failed to act.

I had to resort to detective work to keep the story going. Three sources confirmed to me that the Government wanted to abandon the scheme altogether. The row created by *The Times* articles ensured that it could not do so. The Government bowed to the pressure from its own back benchers, introduced a limited scheme and set up a joint liaison committee to ensure that the full scheme would be phased in by April 1979.

After those decisions were announced, *New Society* published the now famous article by Frank Field using Cabinet papers to detail what had gone on in Cabinet. A civil service inquiry was set up and failed to find the source of the leak.

I was not interviewed during that inquiry, but the police investigation that followed did involve me. Habershon and Ransome of the Yard came to interrogate me, one playing the sweet reasonable guy dealing with a civilised person, the other given more to leaning and blunt questions. I told them

Rhythm only

The 1400-strong Guild of Catholic Doctors claims that doctors who will discuss only the rhythm method of contraception deserve a special item of service fee for doing so. They say they are being treated unfairly because they have to provide time-consuming consultations for nothing while non-Catholic doctors get paid just for writing out prescriptions! The General Medical Services Committee is actually supporting this claim.

The FPA, while strongly opposing paying such a fee to doctors who won't even discuss most contraceptive methods, admits that there is some truth in the 'fast prescription' accusation. Only about a quarter of GPs are registered to fit IUDs and about the same number are skilled enough to fit caps. Since they can't prescribe the sheath, most GPs are indeed offering a Pill-only service.

And with many women turning away from the Pill, there has been an increase in the number of men using sheaths – about 2.7 million now do so, a rise of 200,000 in the last year. But the FPA says sheaths are difficult to obtain – unless young people can get them free from clinics, they have to pay for them. So the FPA is campaigning for GPs to be able to prescribe them.○

Eva Kaluzynska

"The depression which can follow an adverse change in circumstances, such as living in a high-rise flat, is usually of the neurotic or reactive kind" says the blurb on this ad. It goes on to recommend the cure: tranquillisers. The message has clearly been taken to heart by many doctors. According to an Institute of Psychology survey, drug taking in South East London conjures up the "Orwellian spectre of chemical manipulation of the masses". Nearly 50% of women between 25-44 had taken tranquillisers at some time; 5% of all women had taken the drugs for at least six months in the previous year. According to another report from Southampton University, many doctors prescribe incorrect dosages, unnecessarily prolong treatment and even prescribe more than one virtually identical drug to the same patient at the same time.○

✸ A West German doctor, Karl Juritza, has decided that women aren't physically suited to technical work .... after all we have shorter thumbs than men! Even more ridiculous is that Munich's Christian Social Union government has decided to cancel a £200,000 grant for 30 apprenticeships for women to become fitters, mechanics and electricians on the basis of his evidence.

✸ The number of rapes reported to the police in London in the first quarter of this year was twice the number reported in the same period last year. The police say now they get approximately one rape every 30 hours and four indecent assaults a day. However, it is impossible to say if this means an actual increase in the occurrence of rape, or an increase in the number of women prepared to report.

✸ Student union presidents in Oxford, Cambridge and London were staggered to receive 'man-to-man' letters from Aristos, a women's fashion designer, asking them in all seriousness "which part of the female form they would like to see 'highlighted' in fashions next year". Aristos' publicity consultant explained "the theory of the 'floating erogenous zone' whereby legs, bottoms, busts, waists, arms, necks etc take their turn in taking the fashion focus for any given period." Leg or breast, chaps? The presidents suggested angrily that Aristos ask the female forms how *they* want to dress.

✸ More women under 35 are dying from cervical cancer every year, although the overall number of deaths has been reduced by screening for the early stages of the disease (see *SR* 68 for an account of the Papp smear test). At the moment GPs are paid only for smears from women 35 and over, so Elizabeth MacGregor and Sue Teper, two doctors from Aberdeen University, recommend in the *Lancet* that screening be extended to all women.

✸ Mary Beth Colpo, an American woman, won the Windermere International Long Distance Swimming Championship and broke the existing record by 15 minutes. She swam the 17 miles in 6 hours 10 minutes and 33 seconds – that is, at an average speed at which most people *walk*. The first man to finish the race arrived at the finishing buoys 34 minutes later.

MORE NEWSHORTS P.17▸

Newshorts by Jill Nicholls, Angela Phillips and Ruth Wallsgrove
PLEASE KEEP SENDING US YOUR NEWS, RELEVANT CUTTINGS AND PHOTOS

nothing they did not already know.

Two journalists are now on trial for alleged offences under the Official Secrets Act. Not a word of information they received has been published. Mine was and helped to avert a complete betrayal over child benefits. There, I am bound to say, but for the Grace of God go I.○

ONE PARENT PROPOSALS

According to the National Council for One Parent Families:

* half of all homeless families are one parent families.
* half of all squatter families in London are one parent families.
* between 60-90,000 children in care are from one parent families –often because of poor housing conditions.

The Council suggests that the Government's Housing Bill, now being prepared for the new session of Parliament, should:

* have a non-discrimination clause to stop local councils giving one parent families inferior housing.
* give single parents whose children are in care because of bad housing a legal right to a decent home.
* give single parents who get custody the right to have a council tenancy transferred to them following marriage breakup.
* abolish residential qualifications for council housing which act against one parent families who wish to move nearer to relatives, friends or a job.○

RUTTLE & RACE

This country's traditions of fair play still have a firm upholder in Judge Ruttle, who dealt with two recent cases from the Race Relations Board.

Case One: Ms U. Patel applied twice for the job of assembly worker at Lesney's toy factory. Twice she was told there were no vacancies, though on both occasions there were notices advertising work outside the building. Ms Patel and her brother decided to ask for help from their local Community Relations Council. So a caseworker with an English accent rang the next day to ask about a job for his sister – yes, said the personnel officer, there were vacancies, could his sister come for an interview? Five minutes later Mr Patel rang to ask about *his* sister's chance of the job. No vacancies.

This piece of deception outraged Judge Ruttle – no, not the personnel officer's, she was a "patently honest witness", whereas the test which was conducted on the telephone was "an exercise in lying". Take a detention, Waltham Forest CRC. And hard lines, Ms Patel.

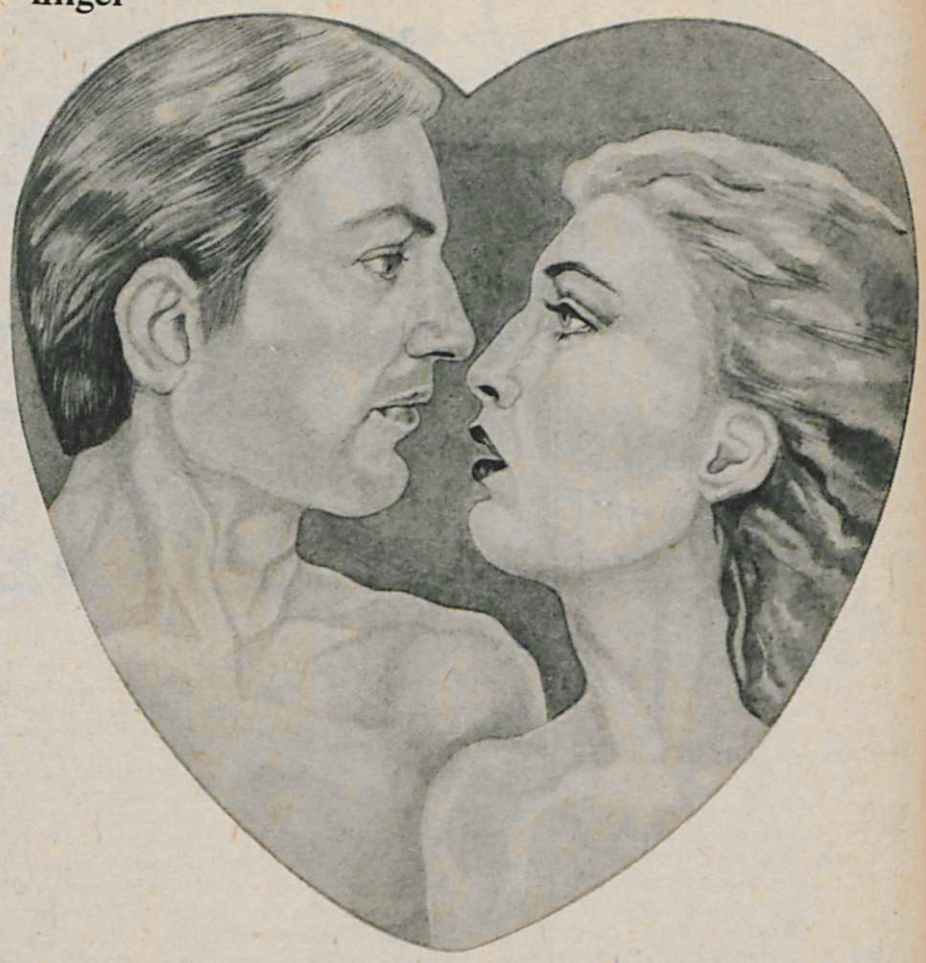
Case Two: the Nurses' Association placed this ad in the *Irish Times: JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, has a lot to offer ambitious SRNs *Free Return Ticket* Group Travel * All the Year Sunshine * All White Patients Only * Serviced Apartments * All Meals Free* etc. . . The Nurses' Association argued that any discrimination against coloured nurses would occur outside Great Britain and outside the range of the Race Relations Act. They *also* argued that "the phrase 'all white patients only' was purely descriptive, and there was no reason why the attraction, if such it was, should not apply to black nurses".

Finally, they argued that they had not *published* the advertisement in Great Britain. Judge Ruttle agreed. ○

Messages of appreciation etc, to His Honour Judge H S Ruttle, 4 West Side, London SW19

Amanda Sebestyen

It was her first kiss, her first love, a memory which would linger through the years...



The Real

By

jane ROGERS

Illustrated by
CHRISTINE McCAULEY

first look

1. At last, across the crowded room, he managed to catch her eye. She gazed back at him, arrested, beautiful and unselfconscious as a wild creature facing a man; curious, but entirely other. She was lovely, and he knew then he must have her. It was love at first sight.

2. I really can't remember.

first kiss

1. She looked forward to Sunday all week, and time passed so slowly it seemed more like a year. But like all good things, it proved a day well worth waiting for. There was a gusty, fitful wind and brave silvery sunshine, with fleecy little clouds racing across the great bare sky. He was waiting for her at the gate, as he said he would be, and his stern tanned face broke into a wide smile as he saw her battling against the wind towards him. He helped her over the gate and they walked together along the clean-washed beach, leaning forward into the wind, breathless and laughing. There was no need to talk – they were together. He reached for her hand, and she allowed his to brush hers, then teasingly drew it away. He glanced at her, her eyes were sparkling with delight. Light as a leaf in the wind she spun away from him across the sand, her laughter tinkling behind her – and danced' down to the sea's edge. He started to move after her, then froze for a moment as his heart lurched to a sudden love for her, as she ran, abandoned as a child, towards the sea, her blonde hair streaming out behind her. As he watched she reached the water's edge and stopped, a tiny fearless figure facing the great blue ocean, as if unaware of, or defying, the dangers and terrors those deeps held. He yearned to protect that fearlessness, to guard that innocent trust; to stand with her, to face together that great hazardous sea.

With a sense of passionate urgency he ran towards her, and as he approached she seemed to sense him and she turned to meet him. He grasped her violently in his arms and bent his lips to hers in a kiss that ran through her lips and body like a fire, melting her to him, fusing them together, man and woman, one being, in the promise of love.

2. On Sunday we were supposed to be going for a walk. It was very windy. I didn't want to go, when it came to it; it looked cold, and I was sure we would run out of conversation. We couldn't agree on where to go, I knew the wind would be terrible on the beach, coming straight off the sea, and I wanted to go along the valley which was at least reasonably well sheltered. But he wanted the beach. Which is where we went in the end. I was right, the wind was fierce, the spray spattered on us like rain. He was very jokey and talkative to begin with, talking about a film he'd seen last night (on his own?) and making jokes about English summers. But going along that beach was hard work. You had to keep your head down and your eyes half closed to stop the sand getting in; lean at a forty-five degree angle forwards into the wind; and shout at the top of your voice if you wanted to be heard above the roaring and crashing. I was wearing my anorak and it blew up with air so that I must have looked like a walking michelin man. I just couldn't

Thing

think of anything to say. Every now and then I could feel he was looking at me, so I'd look back at him and he'd give a smile or else look away quickly, so in the end I felt awkward and didn't know where to look.

After a bit he started talking, asking me things, I could hardly hear a word and had to keep screaming "What?" and pointing to my ears to show I couldn't hear. He was asking me about my family and how long we'd lived here. Deliberately thinking of things to keep a conversation going. I wanted to say, if he must talk, why not go up further over the sand dunes so we'd be more protected? But I felt embarrassed to suggest it – couples go in the dunes – and anyway it would have meant we'd *have* to talk. When he gave up for a minute I ran off in front of him, partly to escape the next 'what?', partly because I was beginning to feel such a lump, plodding along. It would look as if I was enjoying it. I was, in a way, but it felt so awkward. I could have cheerfully run on, away, at full speed. He came running after me so I really put a spurt on, but he caught up with me in the end – grabbed my arm and I fell over on the sand. He leant over close to pull me up but instead of letting myself be pulled up I grabbed at his hands and pulled him sideways, so that he stumbled and fell heavily. I got up and stood laughing at him. But I felt awkward. I'd been too violent. I must have seemed like a silly kid – horse play. Was he trying to pull me towards him? I felt completely embarrassed, and started walking on. He caught up with me but didn't say anything. We walked back most of the way in silence. When we got to where the track meets the beach he stopped, poking a shell around with his toe in the sand. Then he picked it up again and said, "Look." I went to take it from him and he grabbed my hand. "What?" I said, feeling foolish. I wished he'd get on with it, I could feel myself going red. He pulled me near and kissed my mouth, then he let go my hand and put his arm round my neck. He was pressing my head to him. He didn't just kiss me, he kept his mouth there, I couldn't breathe. I pushed at his chest and he drew back looking at me in surprise. I laughed, to excuse myself, and ducked under his arm and started to run up the beach. He would think I was stupid, I didn't know what to do. I should have put my arm round him. I wanted him to kiss me – I suppose I did – but not – I didn't know what I was supposed to do. Should I have taken my mouth away to breathe then kissed him back? I thought it would look as if I was too eager. I couldn't bear him to know no-one had kissed me before.

Every time I thought of it afterwards I went hot with embarrassment; he would think I was a kid.

first morning

1. He bent over her sleeping head and whispered,

"I love you." She stirred softly, and reached out her arms. Then she opened her eyes slowly and smiled at him. They embraced again.

"I'm so happy," she said.

"You look like a fluffy little bird," he whispered, stroking his hand over her rumpled curls. "My little nest bird!" Gently, he kissed her lips, her eyes, her cheeks, pulled her tight to him again. "I could stay here forever." She turned her bright head away from him suddenly – "Look! It's snowed!" He raised his head to look. Excited as a lovely child she jumped out of bed and ran to the window, and clapped her hands.

"It's deep! It's perfectly white everywhere – oh look!"

Rapt, she stared out. He gazed at her profile, pure as a marble statue in the reflected snow light. She turned to him. "It's for us," she said. He looked puzzled. "It's like a new world – everything clean and beautiful, all the dirt and ugliness is covered up, a beautiful white sparkling world – a world for

The Real Thing

lovers – our new world!" Moved, he got up and went to stand by her. Together they looked out at the dazzling unfamiliar scene.

"We must go out!" she exclaimed. Turning to him, pleading as she saw his expression. "Just for a little, just to run around and make some footprints. To show we know it's for us!" What a creature of impulse she was! She would be lovely in the snow, but standing here warm beside him, she was even lovelier. He pulled her more closely to him. "Come back to bed first," he breathed, in a voice thick with desire. With a mysterious little smile playing at the corners of her mouth, she tilted back her head and surveyed him. She was Cleopatra, mistress of love's secrets, artful. Then as suddenly she was close to him again, surrendered, loving, abandoned in her generosity. He carried her to the bed, watching her precious, familiar, evernew face, entranced; she was all women; like a beautifully cut diamond her many magical sides sparkled and complimented each other. This everchanging love could never end. Burying his face in her hair, he said softly,

"I love you. I love you." Raising his head thoughtfully for a moment, speaking almost despite himself, he whispered to the white snow-lit room, "It's the real thing."

2. It didn't seem as if I'd slept but I must have done because I opened my eyes and it was very light in the room – it was white. The light seemed unnatural, glaring. My eyes were watering like an old woman's. I turned my head and I could see his shoulder and hair. Carefully, I lifted up the bedclothes and got out of bed. He didn't move. I felt as if I would crack when I moved my legs apart. Very quietly I opened the door and went to the bathroom. The first thing I did was look in the mirror. I half expected – I don't know – too see a different face. At least to see that it had registered somewhere. I expected to look sensual, or experienced, or something. But the same blank face faced me. All its expressions were peeled off and it didn't tell me a thing. It didn't look secretive either. I went to the toilet and then I noticed the blood on my thigh, a thick black smear, dried. My stomach went tight. I started rubbing at it, then I wet some toilet paper and rubbed and scrubbed till it had gone, leaving a red scratched patch on my leg.

I filled the sink and washed myself between the legs. It was sore.

When I'd finished I sat on the edge of the bath with the towel around me, I was cold but I didn't want to move. I felt as if I couldn't do anything. I wanted a mother or someone like that to take charge. What happens next? What when he wakes up? I wanted to be alone. I couldn't bear him to look at me till I knew what I was. I was like someone who's had an accident; they don't feel anything for a while, they're numb. I tried to think about it. But I felt nothing. I told myself, "You've done it at last, you're like everyone else now. The barrier's down." I tried to laugh at that, but my stone face refused to move. I didn't want to think over the details of it. "You were glad when it was finished," I told myself. That must be wrong. I didn't like it. It seemed like nothing.

I remembered I'd read about a custom in a tribe somewhere – in Africa, I expect. Just before a girl is married they keep her away from all the men, in a hut with her mother and all women relatives, and they prepare her. The night before the wedding they have a great feast and dance, with masks and music, a great ritual, the bride dances among the women and the music gets more and more frenzied, beating and beating, and at the climax the headman – with them all watching – he does it to her with a stick, a special kind of stick. And they all sing and celebrate when he shows the blood. They all rejoice. Then her women take her back and clean her and help her, and she meets her husband the next day, without that awful virginity between them. When I read it, it revolted me. Now I wish it had happened to me. It wouldn't be like nothing then; it would really be something.

I noticed the whitish light again and knelt on the toilet seat and lifted up the mucky net curtain to look out. It had snowed – everywhere was covered in white. I started to cry. It was utterly still out there, everything buried under thick snow, and the sky seemed low, deep grey; nothing moved. The whole world had changed in the night. I didn't want to be alone there. I thought we would be together. I did feel pleased in a way, that I'd done it – just because I had, like smoking your first cigarette. But it should be more than that. I was ashamed of my thought, because it made me even more separate from him.

The tears kept rolling down by cheeks. I could keep them going, it was soothing. I stopped suddenly. I could see myself. *Wanting* to feel sad. I wasn't sad. I didn't feel anything.

I stay very still now, kneeling, looking out. My head is empty, I stare at the white snow and think nothing and feel nothing except the stillness.

I stare at it till my eyes are full of whiteness, my head is full of whiteness like a million empty pages; it doesn't matter, it hasn't even happened. Nobody knows it's happened except me, maybe it didn't even happen. What would make it real? Nobody knows, it's nothing. Nothing can matter; nothing matters to me. I am snow.

But I imagine him. The ice cracks. I see what he might see. Wondering where I am, coming quietly to the door and listening, then pushing it open slightly. Seeing me kneeling there with the towel round me looking out at the snow. I can see the picture he would see, the narrow brown shoulders and slipping towel and pink feet sticking out soles upwards. The separate captive creature staring out. His heart would melt. He'd come and put his arms around me. He would love my singleness. Yes!

I am posing.

When I went back to the bedroom I was nearly blue with cold but I felt fairly controlled. It was as if I'd put a great distance or age between myself and it. But he was still asleep! I could hardly believe that, it seemed to deny that I existed. I got dressed.

As I was putting my shoes on he woke up. "Are you up already?"

"Yes."

"Oh." I stood for a moment waiting as if my feet were touching a crack in the ice. Say "come here", say "I love you", say "Are you all right?" He didn't say anything. I went to the window quickly, but my face was burning because he watched me walk.

"It's snowed."

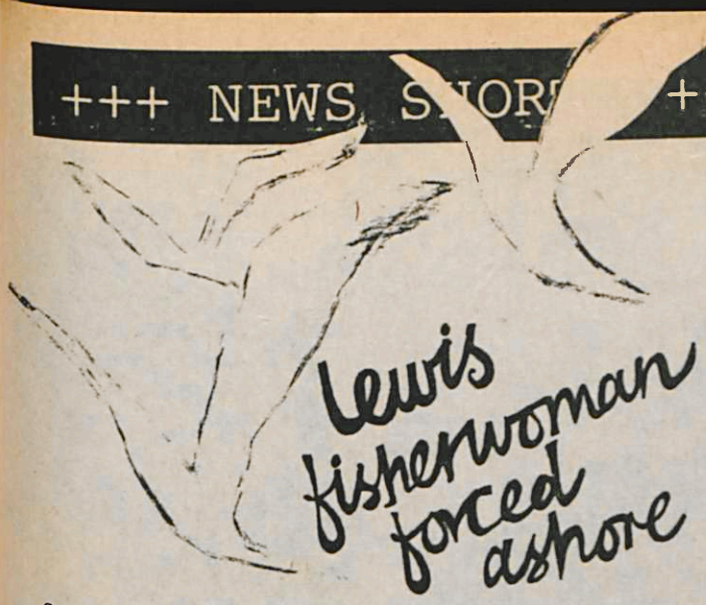
"Has it?"

"Yes." Silence. Suddenly he sat up violently and said:

"I'm starving, it always makes me hungry. Let's go and buy some stuff to cook a big breakfast. Pass my jeans – on that chair."

I couldn't believe it. "It always makes me hungry." While he got dressed I kept looking out the window. But he didn't even notice. He went to the door. "Are you coming?" He started to do downstairs. He was behaving as if nothing had happened. Well? Nothing had happened.

But I felt frightened, as if I'd thrown something away without knowing its value. I remembered that he'd never even said "I love you". I'd been cheated.



Lewis fisherwoman forced ashore

Sue Hesp broke all local tradition when she got a place as a crew member on a fishing boat in Lewis, in the Western Isles of Scotland. A 30 year old ex-policewoman from Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, she had been researching the fishing industry in Lewis. Her ambition was to get four years experience as a deckhand, two of them on a fishing boat, so that she could sit for the 'master's ticket' which you need to get a licence to skipper a boat.

She started work on one Stornaway boat in July, earning up to £90 a week, but in late September was forced ashore because of pressure from the fishermen's wives, who presumably saw her presence on the boat as a threat.

She has just been given a berth on another local boat, the 'Sonas' ('peace' in Gaelic). MacLeod, her new skipper, says: "I don't see that it's anyone's business. I've no comment to make about my new crew member." We reprint here a letter Sue Hesp wrote to the *West Highland Free Press* early in October:

Fishing has always been seen as a man's world and I didn't enter it with any ideas of Women's Liberation, but with the sole intention of working at a job that gave me both pleasure and fulfilment as a human being.

I knew I was walking a tightrope and when Skipper Billy Campbell offered to take me aboard his boat 'Highland Chieftain', he also walked the same rope. I met with mistrust, disbelief and ridicule from other fishermen.

The pressure was on; they stood back and watched. They were waiting to see if I sank or swam! And I swam. I became accepted and admired.

I was taught and eventually expected to pull my weight by other crew-members of the 'Chieftain'. I was shouted at and told off when necessary and I was laughed at when I boobed – but I was accepted. I began to relax and enjoy my work.

I found the community at large was very friendly and helpful and although the way of life on the Island of Lewis was far different from my past way of life, I followed the local traditions and curbed my lifestyle to suit.

It wasn't the men of the island, however, but the women who were the cause of my downfall, and on September 22 I was told to leave the boat.

Not because I was incapable of doing the job; in fact the only thing I appear to have done wrong was to be born a woman and it was the same species who pressurised their menfolk to get rid of me. Billy Campbell was very upset when he paid me off. He tried to fight on my behalf. He was proud of me as a worker, but couldn't afford to lose his whole crew, and the wives were complaining.

I had never done or said anything on board to draw attention to the fact that I was a female. I was just as dirty and unkept as the boys; my only concession to female status was to wash my face and wear a clean scarf when landing on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

So where do I go from here? It would be so easy to accept defeat and go and work in an office or maybe try some other form of manual work. I'm not unique. I'm just me, who at 30 years of age found a job of work that suited my temperament. I still want to fish and I still want to study and get my ticket.

This letter is a gesture to those few who neither took the trouble or time to look into my motives in choosing to work in the fishing industry. I'm not defeated. I will fish and if I have to travel the length and breadth of Scotland, I will be accepted.○

Girl Dropped

"It is highly regrettable that someone trying to gain rights under the Sex Discrimination Act should have to take to court the very body designed to help them achieve their rights." This comment from the National Council for Civil Liberties came in response to the Equal Opportunities Commission decision to withdraw funding from the first and only case to be taken under the education section of the SDA. The EOC gave no reasons for their decision and are being taken to court for a "Judicial Review", a complicated legal process in which a court can consider whether or not the EOC can, or should, be compelled to restore their financial support.

The case concerns a Croydon schoolgirl who was prevented from doing "boys' subjects" (woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing) instead of "girls' subjects" (needlework and home economics). The EOC agreed to assist the case financially in October last year. Indeed, in their annual report they describe the case as "a matter of considerable concern to the commission in view of the low representation of girls and women in technical apprenticeships and fields of employment."

The EOC has refused to comment as the matter is now sub judice.○

PART-TIME DODGE

The Employment Appeal Tribunal has ruled that a woman working part-time is not entitled to the same hourly rate as a man working full-time at exactly the same job.

Most married women in the garment trade work less than a 40 hour week; Kathleen Handley does

MARK RUSHER (IFL)

26 hours. She feels this should not mean she gets less pay per hour. Her employers, H. Mono Ltd, agree she is doing 'like work' to P. Jammadas, the male worker taken as a comparison. But because she works under 40 hours, she gets £1.61 an hour while he gets £1.67.

The question under the Equal Pay Act is whether the difference in hours worked is a 'material difference'. The company argued that "her work, although the same operation, is not in total of the same use to the employer" because "she is not able to be utilised when she is not there" – which would seem to justify discrimination against anyone not at work 24 hours a day!

Justice Gordon Slynn, new chairman of EAT, agreed that it was a material difference – she "was really contributing over all less to the production of the company and less to the utilisation of the company's equipment . . . she was in essence doing a different kind of job". But it isn't an employee's responsibility if the machinery isn't used when she isn't there!

The judgement is particularly ominous as it is Slynn's first EAT case and he seems to be finding loopholes where none existed before. He even claimed the company was offering concessions by letting people work part-time at all. So they should be grateful for the wage they get?

Ms Handley's lawyer referred to Lord Denning's ruling that the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts should be interpreted as a harmonious whole. Since women are the majority of part-time workers, because they have the main responsibility for children, it is indirectly discriminatory for part-timers to get a lower rate of pay. As Harry Kay, tribunals officer for the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers, said, the decision "makes nonsense of the EPA. By and large women are not able to work a 40 hour week."

And Kathleen Handley said, "I'm disgusted. You work harder when you're part-time, you get that bit extra in. Hour for hour I do more than that man. Without their part-timers they'd be lost."○

TOLD OFF

More news on press reactions to our Back to School Issue (*SR* 75). The *Times Educational Supplement's* back-page diarist had a go at the Equal Opportunities Commission for their misuse of funds – that is, giving *Spare Rib* money to produce the poster, and then not 'vetting' it: he seemed to find it amazing that the contacts listed on it included the National Abortion Campaign and Lesbian Link – what earthly relevance could these have for school girls?

Meanwhile, the focus of attack on Sally Shave, the teacher who's been in trouble for daring to publish her ideas on non-sexist approaches (*SR* 75 and 76) has become 'personal' – her clothes, the way she speaks with the children, who she lives with. Three parents (backed by three dissenting governors – one more than last month) have written to Hertfordshire Education Authority to say they didn't want their children taught by her (they're not anyway). And all the children have been ordered to address their teachers formally, no more of this first-name laxity, or they will actually be punished. Several parents have complained, to no avail.○

ASIAN GIRLS AT SCHOOL

"Don't you understand English or are you just stupid?"-for Asian children, racism is impossible to ignore.

Parents' night at Elmhurst School, London E7.

School, with its white figures of authority, its totally foreign values and judgements, comes as a shock. After the initial effects of this wear off, children begin to realise their own and their parents' position. The rules of the education system, such as bussing and the reception class system (see below), are only implicitly racist, but the way Asian children are actually treated in school is often quite overtly so. When a child gets out of line in assembly and the teacher shouts "Don't you understand English or are you just stupid", or when Indian parents who do come to speak to teachers are laughed at or rebuffed, children both black and white learn just how Indians are thought of by people who matter. What these children face is a kind of colonial experience which they are far too young to fight against. The children under eleven I spoke to almost invariably had a sense of inferiority similar to that of a colonised people. They were ashamed of anything Indian. They disowned their food and their language and in some cases even their Indian first names. A few tried to make even their skin as inconspicuous as possible – as white as possible.

These children seem too young to fight against cultural racism in school; it is as though they are almost stunned into accepting the inferiority with which white society has labelled them. But at 12 their feelings seem to change. It is not that racism vanishes – in fact it intensifies and violence increases, but most children start to face up to it at this point, and their 'inferiority' usually clears away. After all, when racism takes the form of violence, they can't fail to recognise it as an attack on themselves, and part of a value system they cannot go along with. Also, with puberty, children, especially girls, begin to develop their own sense of identity. Previously their view of Britain was conditioned by their parents' expectations. Now they can reject these and look back more objectively at the implicitly racist atmosphere of their primary school days.

In Southall bussing and reception classes go on through secondary school. Geeta Amin and I have described some of the effects of reception class in secondary schools as they were in 1974 (*Guardian* 15 Aug. 1974):

"When immigrant children first enter the borough they are sent, if the education department has any doubts about their English, to an assessment centre, and from there a large proportion of them are channelled into reception classes. They stay in the reception classes for a period of up to three years, after which they are usually dropped into the lowest streams of the schools to which the classes are attached . . . East African Asian children are sent for assessment even when they speak fluent English . . . The fact that reception classes are lumped with the remedial department sharpens the image which English children have of them. The class, located as it usually is in a prefabricated hut at the bottom of the school garden, is seen as inferior. We were told by English boys that reception classes were 'like junior schools with pictures on the walls' and that the work done in them was not really serious. The boys could see that in reception classes, as in the all-in village school of a few generations ago, only one teacher taught all subjects to children between 12 and 16. This was taken as proof that the class was inferior to, and separate from, the main school.

According to teachers, the school was divided into three social groups, which didn't mix: English children, Indian children in the main school, and reception class children. In the frequent racial fights, reception class children are usually the targets. When reception class children fight back, schools take drastic measures to avoid clashes. In two Northolt schools, for example, Indian children were sent home half an hour early every day last term. This meant they missed virtually a whole period every day. Reception class children involved in fights have also been moved to schools outside the area 'for their own safety', we were told by teachers. The children's version was 'they were chucked out because they fought back'."

The position of Asian children in secondary schools in and around Southall is made worse by bussing. They are literally outsiders in the schools they attend, miles away from their homes. Their gathering for the bus ride home is often the occasion for a racial attack. In October 1975 a Pakistani boy of 15 was killed by a gang of white boys at a bus stop.

The anger among Asian teenagers which Geeta and I noticed in 1974 has of course since then led to Asian boys hitting back. For them the role of victim of white gangs is over. But now there is a new kind of racial violence in schools – girls attacking girls. Girls of 12 to 15 I spoke to in Harlesden said that the worst aspect of their lives was the bullying and racism they faced in school. Sharmi (12) said: "They call you Paki, things like that, and if you answer back then you are really in serious trouble. Then they get their friends on you, they beat you up. If you report it, that's worse still! None of the Indian girls complain, because they are afraid of being beaten up, so none of them go up to the headmaster and complain."

In schools in this area, the girls told me there were three social groups, West Indian, English and Irish, and Asian.

An extract from Amrit Wilson's remarkable new book *Finding a Voice* in which Asian women speak for themselves about their experiences in Britain.

"There is hostility between West Indians and English", they told me, "they don't mix much, they keep apart, though sometimes there are fights. But attacks on Asian girls are much more common."

Quite apart from the violence, the girls told me it was difficult to be friendly with white girls. Sharda (15) said: "They usually talk about their boyfriends; we haven't got any to talk about. If they talk about their homes, their homes are completely different from ours. We accept what they say, but if we talk about our homes – my mum said this or I cooked this – they hardly understand what we are saying. We have to explain every single thing. They want to know how or what for, about every thing, then at the end they say 'Rubbish!' and they tease and tell other people. We eat with our fingers – they think that is dirty and disgusting."

Relations with West Indian girls seemed no better. Tara (14) told me of a sequence of events which, her friends agreed, was hardly an exception: "A girl in my class, just because one coloured girl doesn't like her everybody gangs up against her. They used to really flatten her down. Now they don't talk to her. Nobody talks to her. Before, every time there was games they would kick her and everything. When she complained, she'd had it. She had to stay off school for two or three weeks."

However Sharda had a close friend who was West Indian and she had discussed with her the reasons why Asian girls were so frequently attacked and bullied: "I have a Jamaican friend, she says there should be no difference if someone is West Indian, Indian or African, we are all black. She says that we Indians are not 'strict' enough. She says, 'If a coloured girl tells you off, you are a grown-up, you should give it back.' I say 'I might be the only one, while she has five friends.' That's the trouble, Indians are just one on their own. But coloured girls, they make a gang and defend each other or beat others up . . . If only we could be like that! Then things would change. West Indians never went to self-defence classes but they can still beat us up. It is co-operation with each other that is most important. It is also very difficult to get. Sometimes I myself am not sure if I could do it. If I saw an Indian girl being beaten up, I might just watch or walk away. My Jamaican friend, if she saw a coloured girl being beaten, she would run to help her. Even if she doesn't know her, hasn't seen her before."

East African Asians told me that West Indians sometimes behave as though they are superior to Asians, because Asians are religious or because Asians can't speak English well. However, an Asian community worker in North London told me, "West Indian children are only reacting to the insufferable cultural superiority that Asians feel. Indian culture is a big barrier and they make it more so by always thinking they are superior." Both these opinions were repeated to me by many people and both seemed likely to be true. In addition, as one white secondary school teacher told me, "It is a matter of style. In the eyes of children, West Indians have it and Asians don't. When a West Indian boy walks in, the girls look up; they don't do that for an Asian. In our school there is no doubt there is a hierarchy. The West Indians are at the top and the Asians are at the bottom."

But a more powerful reason for conflict than all these is the British education system itself, with its essentially ethnocentric curriculum, its apathy, its built-in attitude that Western culture is the only culture and its pervasive mockery of people who are 'different'. It is a system insidious but extremely powerful, where pupils may end up learning quite a lot about the way of life in ancient Rome and Greece but nothing about the way of life of their fellow pupils who are black. It is a system where a reasonably educated person would have heard of Homer but never of Kalidas, of Ibsen but rarely of Tagore, of Joan of Arc but not of the Rani of Jhansi (another woman who took arms to try to drive the British out of her country), of Goethe but not of his contemporary the great Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib.

This ignoring of non-European high culture and history may not seem important, but it is a part of the same ethos which permits the everyday culture of Asian life to be stamped on so viciously in schools. Sharmi told me what a small thing, cooking a few Indian dishes in a Willesden school, led to: "Mrs X (a teacher) used to like Indian food and there were quite a few Indian girls in the class, so in two or three lessons in the cookery class they made Indian food. They made chapattis and everything. They brought some things from home as well. Mrs X said: 'I don't mind if you use my pots and pans'. Then after two lessons some second year girls came over. They said, 'It stinks, it's disgusting, it's horrible stuff!' . . . When they say directly to you it stinks or something like that, you get hurt inside of you. People start crying. They really start crying. It is not a pretty sight to see people so hurt. So after it happened a few times our teacher said, 'We won't have cooking like this any more.' She stopped cooking. She said, 'There'll be no cooking except the things I have to teach – things like cakes.' "

The girls I spoke to rarely discussed their problems at school with their parents. At the back of their minds many feel that perhaps they would fail to understand, or take in a situation so different from their own educational experiences. Girls from orthodox Muslim and Sikh families feel this most strongly; they also fear that through some misunderstanding their parents might try to withdraw them from school altogether, cutting off their lifeline to the outside world. Some of these girls whose families have come from rural areas in Azad Kashmir or Mirpur feel that their parents allow them to go to school only because in Britain it would be illegal for them to remain at home. To criticise the school system in these circumstances would be not only pointless but risky.

Asian parents' attitudes to their daughters' education vary tremendously with their religion, background in Pakistan or India, and, of course, with the people involved. The progressives, like their contemporaries in towns and cities in India, frequently have hopes and dreams for their daughters' academic success. Often they plan out careers for these girls without even consulting them. Meena, a Gujerati Hindu girl whose family come from Bombay, said: "My parents, and most Asian parents, they live for their children. Everything they do is for their children. They have so many hopes and dreams for their children's future. When it doesn't come out the way they want it to, that is when they get most hurt I think . . . They wanted me to be a secretary and they wanted my sister to be a doctor or something medical. I don't know why they decided it that way. When we went to visit relations my dad would say, 'She is going to be a doctor and she is going to be a secretary.' It turned out to be nearly the opposite (laughs). My sister is a secretary and I am studying biology. It's funny really, now he doesn't say a word."

For Muslim parents, whether peasant or urban in background, their daughters' education in Britain is fraught with conflict between the demands of the school system and the requirements of Islam. According to the Koran, for example, women and girls must always cover their arms and legs. This makes the wearing of school uniform difficult. To add to the confusion the old-fashioned but still prevalent school ethics dictate that girls in trousers are somehow 'rude'.

At least if there is a uniform a rule is seen to exist, but it is in schools where there is no uniform but where girls are prevented from wearing trousers that the greatest conflict can arise (see *SR* 55). In Bradford such issues gave impetus to the demand for single sex schools. Orthodox Muslim parents felt that the schools were making an almost deliberate attempt to obstruct them in their efforts to bring up their daughters as Muslims. While local authorities and Muslim groups in Bradford squabbled over the rights and wrongs of the matter, and the press reported with relish the 'grotesque' attitudes of Muslim parents, no one really asked the daughters what they thought about it. But on the specific question of 'showing' one's legs, after talking to Muslim girls in Bradford and London I feel convinced that they share the views of their parents. Dilip Hiro in his book *Black British, White British* quotes a young Pakistani woman recalling her school-days, when she had to change for swimming and showers: "I was surprised at the English girls who simply used to stand there and change. They didn't seem to be embarrassed, whereas I used to try and hide everything and felt conscious of myself." According to Hiro, "the explanation of this difference of attitudes lies in the variation between the home environment of the Asian and English children. Mehtab, for instance, had never seen her mother or father sunbathing in the back garden. Nor had she ever seen her mother expose her breasts or even legs, at home. She had therefore grown up subconsciously feeling that nakedness was undesirable, even immoral."

When I asked a Pakistani woman in her 40s about this interpretation, she said: "It is true but it is not the full reason. You can say religion forbids us to show our legs. You can say we are not used to it because our parents never sunbathed. But deeper than all this are the values of our society. You see we think that for a woman *Sharam* (shame or shyness) itself is honour. It can be a woman's pride because it reflects her purity and sensitiveness."

In a sense *Sharam* is the complement of *Izzat* (honour, pride, male ego). It is common in one form or another to all Indo-Pakistani cultures. Its effects can vary from never looking a man in the eye or never arguing with a man, to wearing a *Burkha* (long-veiled garment worn over other clothes). Few women brought up in India can truthfully say that they have never felt *Sharam*. For the unwary it is a feeling as infectious as embarrassment or flirtatiousness. It can be very enjoyable, amusing and romantic (because it means that a relationship with a man must depeen through glances, smiles and phrases with hidden meanings). But inevitably it robs women of their strength and power and cramps their personality.

Since *Sharam* in its extreme Muslim form is the antithesis of openness and frankness, to preserve it, no information about the body should be openly available to a woman. This has brought Islam once again into direct confrontation with the British school system. Most of the Pakistani mothers I asked were against sex education in school. Rifat, a woman in her late 30s with an urban background in Pakistan, told me: "I don't think they should learn about these things at such an early age. In Pakistan, when girls go to school or college, they learn about it from their friends. Those who don't learn it that way? Well, they find out after marriage. But here my 14-year-old daughter was shown a film about it in school. She was shocked, stunned by it all. She was deeply embarrassed and ashamed. For a woman *Sharam* is such a precious quality . . . Now eight or nine-year-olds are being taught about periods in schools. For us it was when we finally got a period that we learned about it. Our mothers explained. My daughter also didn't know about it till she had it in school. If you get to know about these things at an early age you lose your shame and shyness. You have all the knowledge, and all the choices are available, and the trouble is that with all this knowledge a child does not know what to do, how to make a decision."

Rifat's opinions were shared by many others, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, but her family in Pakistan must have been exceptionally reticent about sex. Ruksana's comments about sex education in the joint family were more typical: "For a girl not to know about periods before she has them? That must be rather upsetting. In our family my cousins and I knew well beforehand because there were always slightly older sisters and cousins who told us . . . About sex? Yes, that too. I knew all about it in theory because I had a young *Bhabi* (sister-in-law) and she used to tell her friends about her experiences and I used to overhear (laughs). In our family we always learn from each other."

Once an Asian girl has finished school, whether she is Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, the threat or prospect of marriage begins to loom over her, casting a blight over her chances of further education. Once again Hindu girls from an urban background are most likely to study or at least to continue their courses after marriage, but for Muslim and Sikh girls higher education can rarely be achieved without a struggle. However good they might be as students, their families feel that marriage is infinitely preferable to a college career. This is not only because marriage is thought more important but because higher education is dangerous. In orthodox families, educated women are seen as destructive and potentially immoral, and an educated daughter is a source of scandal and potential family dishonour.

As Afshan Begum (who wrote about the oppression of Asian girls in *SR* 60) explains: "In many cases Muslim parents expect that the girl will, whenever they demand, give up everything (eg a course in further education or training or a career) and submit without question to a marriage they have arranged for her . . . these hidden cases which no one gets to hear about are the real tragedies." Those girls who attempt to escape are found in a few days. They have few outside contacts and white society is uncaring and often hostile towards them.

Afshan adds: "In one case I know of, two friends resolved to escape because they had heard their parents 'scheming' of such marriages in the near future. They were found after two days with the help of the police and brought home. On coming home, one, because of psychological stress and the consequences of not having resolved anything, preferred not to face the future – and therefore took an overdose. Ironically enough, on recovery her parents were gentler with her and began gradually to compromise to a certain extent, and now she is at a college of further education. The other girl was not so lucky, her attempted escape accelerated the plans for her marriage."

Another girl went to ask the help of someone regarded as a community leader. This man took her back to her family without any mention, leave alone discussion, of the dilemma which confronted her. "It seems", says Afshan, "that these people as well as the parents refuse to acknowledge that a problem of this nature exists." The subject itself is taboo in many Muslim families, perhaps because Muslim parents regard it (as do the white media) as a choice between two life styles – one Asian and one British. But Afshan says the problem is not that, but one of how to keep one life style without rejecting the other, or, as Meena, the girl from Acton put it: "I never regard myself as English. I am an Indian in every way. It is just that I want to be free."●

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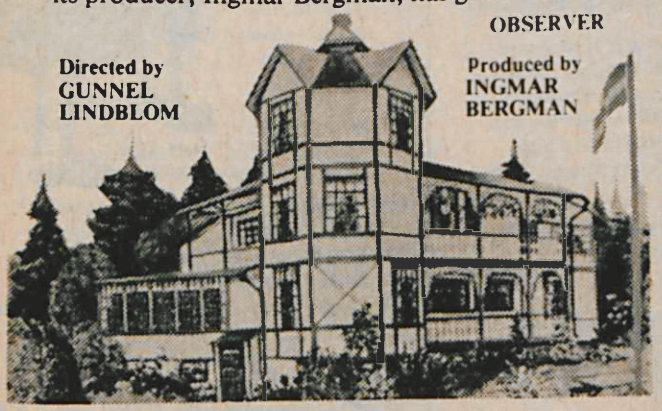

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Screen Education 28 contains articles on Pierre Bourdieu by Annette Kuhn and Richard Nice; Philip Simpson on Gramsci and education; John Tagg on 'The Currency of the Photograph'; John Corner and Sylvia Harvey on Communication Studies; Dick Hebdige and Geoff Hurd on Realism; Jill Forbes on May '68.

Screen Education 29 (out in January '79) will contain a number of articles on the construction of sexuality, including Jo Spence on gender and class in images of women, and Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie on rock music and sexuality.

Subscriptions to **Screen Education** cost £4 for four issues. Single issues and back numbers cost £1.20 (+30p postage). For these and any further information, contact SEFT, 29 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PL (Tel: 01-734 5455/3211).

Compiled by Jane Clarke

HOW TO RENT WOMEN'S FILMS

This is the first in an occasional series of "How to" articles. How to publish a pamphlet, How to book theatre groups and How to set up a workplace nursery are already underway. We've also thought of doing How to produce a leaflet, How to handle the press and How to set up a women's centre. If you can help with any of these or have suggestions for others, please get in touch.

FROM 'COUP POUR COUP'

The Left has always had a somewhat functional attitude towards 'the movies', usually dishing up heavy documentaries, screened for their content 'to promote discussion'.

At first feminist film-making in Britain showed a rather similar attitude. The need was for film as witness, as testimony to another view of femininity. And so most films were either documentaries showing women active in political struggles – previously shown as for men only; biographical films asserting a different experience of being a woman; or historical documentaries making women visible. This work was useful and exhilarating to see at the time, but needed to be extended.

Since *Spare Rib* last ran a catalogue of women's films three years ago, in *SR* 33, feminist film-making in Britain, Europe and the USA has developed a lot. Significantly, this new catalogue contains several feature length narrative films – formerly the male preserve par excellence. This shows both that women film-makers have more access to the means of film production, and that they are concerned to confront narrative forms (surely the most seductive and pervasive of all) with a new position for the narrator, and therefore the audience (*Rapunzel, Riddles of the Sphinx, Take it Like a Man, Ma'am* etc).

The large number of films by women screened at the Edinburgh Film Festivals in 1977 and 1978, and the emergence of a magazine like *Camera Obscura*[1] which deals specifically with feminism and film shows how much is happening in this area. Meanwhile there has also been a (much needed) expansion in independent film distribution, so that women's groups now have a large selection of films available for hire on 16mm gauge.

1 *Available from PO Box 4517, Berkeley, California 94704, USA.*

HOW?

If you want to hold a film show at your meeting, conference, seminar, you will need:

* One large room, preferably 10ft long or more.
* A suitable white wall to act as screen, or a well-ironed white sheet.
* A 16mm sound projector. These can be hired on a daily basis, but it is worth asking around first at schools and colleges in your area, as there are a lot of them around. The current rental rate in London is £10 plus 8% VAT per day. A banker's reference is often required. Look under CINEMA EQUIPMENT in the yellow pages, or ask the distributors themselves. When you pick up the projector you will be given full instructions on how to use it. It's not so difficult to operate, just a bit unnerving the first time round; so if it is your first go it's a good idea to have a practice run-through before your audience arrives. The film is stored on reels which carry 45 minutes' worth each, so if you're screening a feature you will have to change reels half way through.

BOOKING THE FILMS

Distributors often offer a discount of 10% or more if you book three or more feature length films on any one order. This does not mean bookings for the *same* playdate, so if you are planning a *series* of say six films, then it's worth your while to book all six at the same time. Try to book films as far in advance of your planned showing as possible. You can usually 'phone through a reservation, but must confirm in writing later. You will then be sent a contract (or confirmation) which will list the company's conditions of hire. Films are usually delivered one day in advance of playdate, and should be returned the day following your screening.

All the independent distributors have publicity material such as stills, posters, notes on the film, to help you advertise your show, but there is usually a small extra charge for these. The hire charges I have listed are for one non-commercial screening only. Additional screenings are usually half the original fee for each.

A CATALOGUE OF WOMEN'S FILMS

The films have been listed under the distribution company which rents them. I have also included some films which, though not strictly speaking women's films (a difficult category to pin down), are certainly on my list of recommended viewing.[2]

FROM 'ANIMATION FOR LIVE ACTION'

THE OTHER CINEMA, 12-13 LITTLE NEWPORT STREET, LONDON WC2. (01) 734-8508/9 Ask for Jo Boatman.
The Other Cinema Distribution collective consciously support feminist film-making and have, over the years, acquired 33 films in their library. They are also sympathetically flexible in their rental policy, and if a women's group genuinely cannot afford the full hire-charge, will discuss a discount.

FILMS FROM THE LONDON WOMEN'S FILM GROUP (LWFG).

Set up in 1972 for women to teach each other film-making skills (denied them in the industry) and to use these skills to promote feminist ideas. As a production collective the group was disbanded in 1977 but many of its members still make films. Their collective practice and their policy of accompanying films at screenings did much to challenge more hierarchical 'male' attitudes towards film-making with the Director-as-God and the audience out there.

2 *For a comprehensive list write to Nicky North, BFI Educational Advisory Service, 81 Dean St, London W1 and ask for 'The Women's Film List', which costs 50p.*

SERVE AND OBEY 1972 3 mins b&w Linda Dove, Sheila Malone £3.
The title comes from a school motto which sums up an attitude towards educating women! Uniformed, regimented schoolgirls file past the camera while on the soundtrack they speak of the irrelevance of much of their schooling. (*SR* 14)

WOMEN AGAINST THE BILL 1972 20 mins b&w Esther Ronay & Notting Hill Women's Group £5.
One of a number of films made against the Industrial Relations Bill, this contains interviews with women shop stewards from an electrical factory in Tottenham; and brings out the need for women to organise themselves and not rely on male trade unionists.

FAKENHAM FILM 1972 Susan Shapiro & 'Socialist Woman' 10 mins b&w £4.
Documentary about the successful occupation of a Norfolk shoe plant by its all female staff.

MISS/MRS 1972 6 mins b&w Linda Dove £3.
The image of Woman as presented by the media is contrasted with other images taken in the High Street. (*SR* 14)

BETTESHANGER, KENT 1972
10 mins b&w £4.
Women have often been denounced as strike-breakers. This presents a different picture: how women organised in the mining community during the '72 strike, in support of the miners' demands. (*SR* 14)

WOMEN OF THE RHONDDA 1973 20 mins b&w £5.
Three women from this Welsh mining community talk of their lives during the gruelling miners' strikes of the '20s and '30s. As daughters, wives and mothers of the miners: "We were slaves because they were slaves to mine-owners". (*SR* 14)

PUT YOURSELF IN MY PLACE 1973
19 mins colour Francine Winham £6.
Role reversal is used to comic effect so that a married couple see the world from one another's standpoint. (*SR* 30)

THE AMAZING EQUAL PAY SHOW 1974
50 mins colour LWFG in collaboration with the Women's Street Theatre Group £15.
Developed from the street play of the same name this film was one of the first to move away from the realist/documentary mode and try to work through parody and humour. It draws elements from the musical, the horror film, the TV Talk Show and slapstick comedy to examine the inadequacies of the Equal Pay Act. (*SR* 38)

CARELESS LOVE 1976 10 mins colour Francine Winham £5.
This short black comedy in which a woman makes an enormous sacrifice for 'the man she loves' highlights the absurd roles women are expected to play for men.

ABOUT TIME 1976 25 mins b&w Esther Ronay £7.
Deals with the complex issue of whether there should be wages for housework and raises many of the implications. (*SR* 58)

WHOSE CHOICE? 1976 40 mins colour LWFG £14/£7 for women's groups.
Intended especially for women in their teens and early 20s, the film focuses on the question of *choice*. Women are shown as having contradictory feelings towards abortion and desiring the right (and facilities) to *have* children as well as not to.

AN EGG IS NOT A CHICKEN Newsreel Collective GB 1975 b&w 25 mins £7.
Made for the National Abortion Campaign this is more of a campaigning documentary than WHOSE CHOICE. (*SR* 42)

THE JAMES WHITER THAN WHITE SHOW Jeff Perks GB 1975 colour 25 mins £8.
A musical on the right to abortion, based on the West London Theatre Workshop's play of the same name. Like the AMAZING EQUAL PAY SHOW it uses songs, sketches, parody to make its points.

EGA STAYS O.K! Newsreel Collective GB 1977 colour 27 mins £8.
The fight to keep open the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital for women gained wide support from the women's movement. Newsreel Collective made a campaign documentary about the successful occupation and work-in. (*SR* 59)

THE CHICAGO MATERNITY CENTRE STORY. Kartemquin Films USA 1977 b&w 60 mins £18.
Documentary on the fightback by feminists and ethnic minorities in Chicago against the threatened closure of a community home-delivery clinic that offered a safe, inexpensive maternity service for poor mothers. (*SR* 66)

UNION MAIDS Julia Klein, Jim Reichert USA 1975 b&w 45 mins £12.
Demonstrates the central role that three women labour organisers played in the Chicago of the '20s and '30s, using current interview and old newsreel footage. A film which 'rewrites' the predominantly male accounts of such labour struggles. (*SR* 62)

THE DOUBLE DAY International Women's Film Project USA 1976 colour 50 mins £15.
A documentary tracing the twofold oppression of Latin American women in the home and at work, and their struggles for a more equal future.

FROM 'MIRROR PHASE'

IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILDREN Iris Films USA 1977 colour 52 mins £18.
A documentary dealing with the attempts of lesbian mothers in America to win the right to custody of their children; and also with the more general oppressions they encounter. "What presents itself on one level as a rather cosy piece for worried straights, still contains plenty of reminders of the subversive potential of women who raise children without men." (*SR* 74)

HOME MOVIE Jan Oxenberg USA 1973 colour 12 mins £8.
Interesting use of actual home movies of the film-maker as a child and as a cheer-leader at school while the soundtrack recounts her experiences as a lesbian growing up in America and her coming out. (*SR* 76)

A COMEDY IN SIX UNNATURAL ACTS Jan Oxenberg USA 1975 b&w 25 mins £14.
"Oxenberg uses film to parody not only a whole host of stereotyped visions of lesbian sexuality (Six Unnatural Acts), but also to explore and contrast as many different film styles." (*SR* 76)

HORSE OF MUD Atiat el Abnoudi Egypt 1971 b&w 12 mins £5.
The 'horses of mud' are the women and children who, employed in the arduous and endlessly repetitive process of brick-making, are treated like horses. This powerful film is the first work of an Egyptian woman film-maker.

THE SANDWICH Atiat el Abnoudi Egypt 1975 colour 11 mins £5.
This also deals with the acute poverty of rural Egypt; a child makes a sandwich with bread and ants. Atiat el Abnoudi has had trouble with the film censors in Egypt: "When they saw *Horse of Mud* they said I must take out some scenes and some even said it was banned completely. They said we could not show our people like that." (Interview *SR* 10)

COUP POUR COUP Karmitz France 1972 colour 90 mins English subtitles £20.
Fictional reconstruction of a factory occupation by women textile workers. The women's action has repercussions in all aspects of their lives, making them question their role at home, their polite submissiveness to their male foremen and trade union 'representatives'. The film builds up in excitement and joyful irreverence as the women are shown gaining confidence. (*SR* 22)

PENTHESILEA, QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen GB 1974 colour 100 mins £24.
The film-makers trace the Amazon myth through Classical Drama to Comic Strip Heroine in order to argue the permanence of patriarchal thought. A demanding theoretical film which asks 'can there be a female version of the myth?' (*SR* 30)

SWISS GRAFFITI Jacqueline Veuve, Monique Renault Switzerland 1975 colour 6 mins £4.
A visually witty animated history of Switzerland from a feminist viewpoint.

TAKE IT LIKE A MAN, MA'AM! Red Sisters Collective Denmark 1975 colour 96 mins £35/£25 for women's groups. Posters supplied. By making the central character a woman in her 50s experiencing her menopause, the film deals with the politics of female sexuality in a serious and unsensational way. It moves out from the individual experiences of one housewife to encompass all aspects of female oppression, doing this very humorously by switching from realism into a total role reversal fantasy with man as homekeeper, secretary, sex object. (*SR* 44)

SHIRIN'S WEDDING Helma Sanders West Germany 1976 b&w 116 mins £30.
A moving feature length film of a Turkish woman who leaves her native village to avoid an arranged marriage and search for her lover, a migrant labourer working in West Germany. She cannot find him and is gradually forced into prostitution. Emphasises her double oppression, as woman and as migrant worker.

THE ALLROUND REDUCED PERSONALITY Helke Sander West Germany 1977 b&w 98 mins £35.
The film-maker plays the part of Edda – the 'allround reduced personality' – who is trying to work as a photographer, bring up her daughter on her own and express her politics through her work. 'Reduced' because there are not enough hours in the day, but Edda is undaunted. This excellent film is another example of women film-makers' increasing emergence into feature length film production. (Opening shortly at the Scala Cinema, London.)

THE NIGHTCLEANERS PART 1 Berwick Street Film Collective UK 1975 90 mins £24.
In no way a campaign film, it explores through filmic devices the various approaches taken to the struggle for unionisation and better conditions for nightcleaners. (*SR* 40)

STAND TOGETHER Newsreel Collective UK 1977 b&w 50 mins £17.
A campaign film made in support of the Grunwick strikers. (*SR* 66)

HARLAN COUNTY USA Barbara Kopple USA 1976 colour 103 mins £35.
Documentary based on a long strike for unionisation by the Brookside miners of Kentucky. "The film concentrates on the barbarity and inhumanity of the mine owners and operators and on the crucial and supportive role of the miners' wives in the strike." (*SR* 72)

The Other Cinema is currently negotiating for two new films screened at this year's Edinburgh Film Festival:

RAPE Jo Ann Elam USA 1977 b&w 35 mins.
Three raped women speak about their experiences and their anger.

WITH BABIES AND BANNERS Lorraine Gray USA 1978 colour 46 mins.
History books rarely record that women were the backbone of the Great General Motors Sitdown Strike of 1937. This live-action documentary involves women now in their 60s and 70s, who were part of the Emergency Women's Brigade.

SHEFFIELD WOMEN'S FILM CO-OP,
34 Psalter Lane, Sheffield S11.
(0742) 660218/661600 Ask for Jenny Woodley

A WOMAN LIKE YOU colour 20 mins £6
Fiction/documentary about a woman who tries to get an abortion on the NHS. Available from the Co-op.

FROM 'TAKE IT LIKE A MAN, MA'AM'

THAT'S NO LADY colour 15 mins £6
Discusses the myths and prejudices which surround battered women. The scenes are linked by a comedian in a Working Men's Club. Available from regional Women's Aid groups or the National Women's Aid Federation, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

JOBS FOR THE GIRLS colour 30 mins, approx £9
This fictional film about a girl school-leaver who wants to get a job as a motor mechanic highlights notions of femininity, particularly in relation to job choice. Available from December from the Co-op, which also sells prints of all three films.

LEEDS ANIMATION WORKSHOP,
20 Westminster Buildings, 31 New York St, Leeds 2. (0532) 460171 Ask for Jill Lacey

WHO NEEDS NURSERIES? – WE DO! animation colour 10 mins £6.
Presents the serious facts about nursery provision in an entertaining and accessible way, and from a child's point of view. The product of 18 months' work by women with direct experience of nurseries and young children. (*SR* 64)

LIBERATION FILMS, 2 Chichele Rd, London NW2 (01) 450-7855/6.
A film production and distribution company also willing to advise on film and video projects and help out with equipment – you can hire their 16mm film and ½ inch video editing facilities at reduced rates.

SALT OF THE EARTH Herbert Biberman USA 1953 b&w 94 mins £15
A film about the founding of the mineworkers' union in the USA, using miners and their families to play themselves. The filmmakers were victims of the Hollywood political 'blacklist', and produced this film independently. The Mexican miners cannot overcome racial and economic discrimination against them by the company until they overcome their own against the women. (*SR* 33)

ONE TWO THREE Sue Crockford UK 1975 colour 32 mins £8
ONE TWO THREE is about a radical experiment in child care told by the parents and children themselves. The location: a parent-controlled nursery in North London. (*SR* 39)

FILM FOR DISCUSSION Australia 1974 Sydney Women's Film Group 24 mins b&w £6.
Made to introduce general discussion about women's role in work, marriage etc.

WOMAN, ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR LIFE? UK 1971 Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Workshop 15 mins b&w £2.
Silent film contrasting image and reality – "a call to action to women by women". Useful discussion starter.

A WOMAN'S PLACE UK 1971 Liberation Films 32 mins b&w £6.
Covers, with interviews, the first Women's Liberation conference in Oxford 1970, then cuts to a year later, with the first big WL demonstration in London.

THE WOMAN'S FILM US 1971 Newsreel 42 mins b&w £6
Interviews with women involved in welfare rights, labour unions and women's groups.

JANIE'S JANIE US 1971 Newsreel 30 mins b&w £6
Interview with a mother of five who was married at 15 and has just left her husband. She talks about changes she's going through.

THAT'S NO LADY and A WOMAN LIKE YOU (see Sheffield Film Co-op) are also available from LIBERATION at £6. CARELESS LOVE (£5), EGA STAYS OK (£8), UNION MAIDS (£12) and WOMEN AGAINST THE BILL (£4) are available from LIBERATION as well as THE OTHER CINEMA.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE DISTRIBUTION LIBRARY, 81 DEAN STREET, LONDON W1 (01) 734-6451 Ask for Nigel Algar.

LIVES OF PERFORMERS Yvonne Rainer USA 1972 b&w 90 mins £27.50.
FILM ABOUT A WOMAN WHO . . . Yvonne Rainer USA 1974 b&w 120 mins £30.
KRISTINA TALKING PICTURES Yvonne Rainer USA 1976 colour 90 mins £27.50.
Yvonne Rainer's films take as their central concern narrative — how we all 'narrativise' our experiences; how it can be told; how to represent it spatially; how gesture is narrative. All three films have a third person narration, never directly or easily linked to one 'character' in the action of the film; so that a space is opened up for shifting identifications.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE PRODUCTION BOARD, DISTRIBUTION, 27 WHITFIELD STREET, LONDON W1 (01) 580-2773 Ask for Carole Myer, Hilary Thompson.

OCCUPY! Gael Dohany UK 1976 b&w 50 mins £17.50.
Moves beyond the more immediate demands of the 'campaign film' to explore the full implications of the Criminal Trespass Law.

RIDDLES OF THE SPHINX Laura Mulvey, Peter Wollen UK 1977 colour 90 mins £27.50.
"It is more enjoyable, less academic and arguably more feminist than their first film *Penthesilea* . . . attempts to explore the relationship between political issues round childcare and a 'politics of the unconscious'. Although complex, the form of the film is integral to its meaning." (*SR* 59)

RAPUNZEL LET DOWN YOUR HAIR Susan Shapiro, Esther Ronay, Francine Winham UK 1978 colour 80 mins £25.
"The film is structured around the Rapunzel fairy story, first told by a mother to her child, then retold in three mini-features, playing on and satirising faithful old cinematic forms." (*SR* 76)

MIRROR PHASE Carola Klein UK 1978 colour 45 mins £15.
"Using mainly descriptive material of my daughter, I have constructed a film which draws on the psychoanalytical concept of the mirror phase — a stage held by the French analyst Lacan to be important in the development of a young child's growth of subjectivity, and preludes her or his ability to think symbolically and therefore to acquire language." Best accompanied by discussion. (*SR* 74)

ANIMATION FOR LIVE ACTION Vera Neubauer UK 1978 colour 25 mins £10.
A combination of live action and animation; its subject the act of creating a film.

LINA BRAAKE W. Germany 1975 Bernhard Sinkel 85 mins colour £30

CONTEMPORARY FILMS LTD, 55 GREEK STREET, LONDON W1 (01) 734-4901

If three features are booked at a time there is a 10% discount; a 15% discount on a booking of six features; 15% discount for schools and a 50% discount for home users.

ANGELA DAVIS: PORTRAIT OF A REVOLUTIONARY Yolande du Luart USA 1971 62 mins £15.
A political record and a tribute to black revolutionary Angela Davis made by one of her students. (*SR* 33)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE UNDERNEATH Jane Arden UK 1972 135 mins £30.
One of the first British feminist films in feature length; a journey into the workings of a deranged woman's mind, with images of pain, humiliation and suicide. (*SR* 10 and *SR* 33)

PROMISED LANDS Susan Sontag France 1974 colour 87 mins English dialogue £25.
Documentary about Israel which tries to show what it is like to be a citizen of that country, shortly after the outbreak of the Yom Kippur war in October 1973. Caused much controversy from all sides.

THE BIG K Antonia Caccia & others UK 1975 colour 52 mins £20.
The Big 'K' is Kellingley Colliery in Yorkshire. This film, made during the 1974 miners' strike, uses interviews with the miners to recount their hardships and working conditions.

WOMEN OF THE WORLD Faith Hubley USA 1975 animation colour 11 mins £5.
A look at the rise and fall of women's status from the Stone Age to the present day.

WOMEN AGAINST THE BILL and UNION MAIDS (see TOC) are also available from CONTEMPORARY, who also have SALT OF THE EARTH at £25 and ONE TWO THREE at £10 (see LIBERATION).

WIVES Anja Breien Norway 1975 colour 84 mins English Subtitles £30.
"Three wives take a couple of days off together from marriage. The film follows their spree and without ever resorting to tired polemics it conveys innumerable reasons why we need a women's liberation movement." (*SR* 50)

THE STEPFORD WIVES Bryan Forbes USA 1974 colour 114 mins £40.
"It's a real horror story. And the beauty of it is, the Living Dead are just the women Hollywood's been trying to make us into for the last 30 years . . . " (*SR* 73)

CELINE AND JULIE GO BOATING Jacques Rivette France 1974 colour 192 mins £45.
A completely pleasurable three hour fantasy of the adventures of Celine and Julie; not feminist but ideal for a fun screening.

THE LOST HONOUR OF KATHARINA BLUM Volker Schlondorff West Germany 1975 colour 105 mins £35.

YESTERDAY GIRL Alexander Kluge West Germany £25.

CINEGATE LTD, GATE CINEMA, 87 NOTTING HILL GATE, LONDON W11 (01) 727-2651/2/3/4 Ask for Keith Davis.

WOMAN TO WOMAN Donna Deitch USA 1975 colour 48 mins £15.
Moving from a historical sequence, using newsreel footage and old stills, to interviews with women now — a nude dancer in her dressing room; housewives at home; inmates of the women's jail in San Francisco.

ADOPTION Marta Meszaros Hungary 1975 b&w 89 mins English subtitles £30.
Traces the experiences of two women, Kata in her 40s and Anna, a teenager, who in their different ways are both very determined and strong about what they want.

ONE SINGS, THE OTHER DOESN'T Agnes Varda France 1977 colour 105 mins English subtitles £40. (*SR* 75)
"I enjoyed telling the dual story of Apple (The Rebel) and Suzanne (The Reasonable), two opposite and complementary characters who find the quiet happiness of being women.

OCCASIONAL WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE 'X' Alexander Kluge West Germany 1974 b&w 90 mins English subtitles £30.
THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT Rainer Werner Fassbinder West Germany 1972 colour 124 mins English subtitles £30.

THE LIFE OF O-HARU Kenji Mizoguchi Japan 1952 b&w English subtitles £30.

ARTIFICIAL EYE FILM COMPANY, 211 CAMDEN HIGH STREET, LONDON NW1 (01) 267-6036 Ask for Robert Beeson.

INDIA SONG Marguerite Duras France 1975 colour 120 mins English narration and subtitles £35.
"Duras had cast and crew perform at all times to tapes of the music and the spoken texts, whose rhythms and spacings she controlled with a stopwatch. Moving against the Hollywood grain, Duras asserts the superior power of sound over image." (Jan Dawson *Time Out*)

KUHLE WAMPE or To Whom Does The World Belong Slatan Dudow Germany 1931 b&w 73 mins English subtitles £25.
I have included this film — scripted by Brecht and Ottwald — because of the impressive way it analyses the contradictory images of pregnancy, motherhood and abortion.

THE TRIAL OF JOAN OF ARC Robert Bresson France 1962 b&w 65 mins English subtitles £20.
UNE FEMME DOUCE Robert Bresson France 1969 colour 88 mins English subtitles £30.
FIVE WOMEN AROUND UTAMARO Kenji Mizoguchi Japan 1946 b&w 94 mins English subtitles £24.

LONDON FILM MAKERS' CO-OPERATIVE, 42 GLOUCESTER AVENUE, LONDON NW1 (01) 586-4806 Ask for Mary Pat Leece or Felicity Sparrow.
The London Film-makers' Co-op has a large distribution library of films that can be broadly described as 'structuralist'. By this I mean that the films are primarily concerned with the physical properties of film — its celluloid, emulsion, sprocket holes — or with elements of film construction — focus, editing, projection, sound, light, duration. There are a growing number of women in the co-op, all willing to accompany screenings of their work. ●

References to Spare Rib show when the film was reviewed. All those issues (except SR 39) are still available at 40p each inc. postage.

SHORT LIST

INFORMATION TO ANY BRACK

27 CLERKENWELL CLOSE

LONDON EC1

TALKS AND CONFERENCES

A Vindication of Rights of Women and the Literary Work of Jane Austen
17 November. Women's Research and Resources Centre seminar 7.30 at 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Speaker Margaret Kirkham (Bristol Poly).

Marriage Breakdown, Housing and the Law
18 November. Conference 10.00-4.30 at 'New' Longsight Library, Stockport Rd, Manchester 12. Talks by lawyers and housing experts followed by workshops on injunctions, local authority housing in Manchester and Housing Act, housing finance, legal remedies, Women's Aid refuges, and a plenary session on central and local government policies. Organised by Manchester Law Centre, NW Association of Housing Aid, and NW Women's Aid Federation. For details and registration (free for claimants, £1.50 for individuals, £2.50 for solicitors, local authority and housing association workers) contact Wendy Pettifer, Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester 13. For creche contact Wendy or Carol Ann at 061-225 5111.

Women and Education
22 November. Discussion meeting 8.00 at 10 Barkers Lane, Sale. Topic: basic skills. Details from 061-973 7624.

Patriarchy
22 November. Talk and discussion in a series organised by Feminist Review 7.00-9.00 at City University, Northampton Sq, London EC1. Speaker Veronica Beechey on how the concept patriarchy has been used in radical feminist, psychoanalytical and marxist feminist writings. The series is being organised to explore the issues to be raised in the journal as well as to raise funds. Details from FR, 65 Manor Rd, London N16. (enclose s.a.e.).

Women, Cotton, and the CP in Lancashire between the Wars
24 November. Feminist History Group talk 7.30 at the WRRC as above. Speaker Sue Bruley.

Trade Union Conference on Abortion
25 November. 9.30-5.30 at Caxton Hall, London. Speakers on the role of the trade union movement in the fight for a woman's right to choose, and how to implement the TUC's pro-choice policy. Register (delegate's fee £3) with Conference Organising Cttee, c/o NAC, 374 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1.

Sexuality and Power
25/26 November. Gay socialist conference from 10.30 at Caxton House Archway Close, London N19. Workshops on the social construction of the categories female and male, child sexuality, the construction of desire, the use and abuse of the term 'sexism', sex-class theories, personal choice and sexual identification, the sexual constitution of power. Food, creche available. Registration fee 75p. Details from 38 Chalcot Rd, London NW1.

Women and Social Security
25/26 November. Conference at PCL, 115 New Cavendish St, London W1. Sessions on pensions and retirement ages, ideology and social security, social security systems in Britain and other countries, support for those with children. Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre will perform their *Working Women's Charter Show* at 8.00. Organised by the National Council for Civil Liberties. Register (£4 and £1.50 students and claimants) with Ann Sedley, 186 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1. Creche available.

Third World Women
29 November. Feminist Review talk and discussion 7.00-9.00 at City University as above. Speakers from, and whose work is on the Third World. Theme: the similarities and differences between First and Third World women's struggles.

The Woman Artist
1 December. WRRC seminar 8.00 as above. Speaker Pan Nunn (Bristol Poly).

History, Deviance and Social Control
2/3 December. Social History conference at Essex University, Colchester. Sessions on sub-cultures, prisons, and sexuality. Registration Fee £2.00 (£1.00 students). Details from Brenda Corti, Dept. of Sociology, Essex University, Colchester.

Towards a Socialist Way of Living
4 December. Talk in a series on women, the family, and the labour movement, 7.30 at Tyneside Cinema (Upstairs), 10/12 Pilgrim St, Newcastle. Speaker: Sheila Rowbotham. Details from 0632-29057.

Equality, Reform and the Struggle for Women's Liberation
6 December. Feminist Review talk and discussion 7.00-9.00 at City University as above. Speaker Angela Weir on "whether there is a specific feminist political practice, and its implication for an understanding of the Women's Liberation Movement, our relation to it, its direction and possibilities".

Women in the Third International 1919-1926
8 December. Feminist History Group talk 7.30 at the WRRC as above. Speakers Juliet Ashe and Alix Holt.

Women's Family and Household Experience in Melbourne in the early 20th Century.
15 December. WRRC seminar 7.30 as above. Speaker Kerreen Reiger (Preston Institute of Technology, Australia).

Oppression at Work
20 December. Discussion meeting in a series on the position of women. 8.00 at 31a Carlisle Mansions (Basement), Carlisle Place, London SW1. Speaker Marion Banks (engineering worker). Organised by S. Westminster CP.

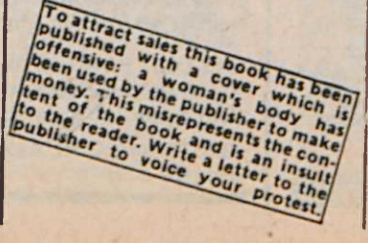
Women and Childcare
20 January. Conference 10.00-4.30 in the Lecture Theatre Block at Essex University, Colchester. Speakers and workshops on nursery nursing and childcare provisions; new exhibition by the Hackney Flashers, films. Details and registration forms from Joanna Bornat or Judy Lown c/o Dept. of Sociology, Essex University Colchester.

South Western Region Women's Gathering
20/21 January. At Charterhouse in the Mendips. Registration forms (£2 50 waged; £1.50 unwaged) from Shepton Women's Group c/o The Day Centre, 19 Commercial Rd. Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

CAMPAIGNS

Violence Against Women at Home and in the Street
How about a week of local action, a national demonstration near to International Women's Day, followed by a festival, on this theme? Some anti-rape and Women's Aid groups have already met in Birmingham to discuss the possibilities.
2 December. Next planning meeting 11am at Birmingham Gay Centre, 9/10 Bordesley St, Birmingham 5. Details from Linda (021-449 5956). There will be a creche. You can also send off your ideas to Bristol Women's Aid c/o Bristol Women's Centre, 44 The Grove, Bristol.

Sexist Marketing of Books
"We have produced a sticker and bookmark to draw attention to specific books that we object to, calling on bookbuyers and readers to protest with us." Put the sticker on the cover or wherever you decide is most appropriate, and the bookmark inside books, on the shelves. But readers, buyers, and sellers can also protest about sexist blurbs, jackets, contents, to reps, publishers, editors, or picket bookshops displaying sexist material. The stickers are 10p a sheet of 24 (self-adhesive) from Maggie and Janet, Grassroots Books, 1 Newton St, Piccadilly, Manchester M11 HW, or Kay 139 Fieldgate Mansions, Romford St, London E1.



Six Months Prison for Abortion
The Women's Liberation Movement in Mauritius (island off Africa) asks for immediate support for Jocelyne condemned to six months imprisonment in a correction convent for having an abortion. Telegrams and letters of support demanding Jocelyne's immediate and unconditional release should be sent to the Prime Minister, Government House Port Louis, Mauritius.

PROJECTS

Letters between Mothers and Daughters
Two women are preparing a book about feminism for a wider readership, consisting of letters between mothers and daughters – daughters explaining developments in the way they live, what feminism has to offer, how they have adopted non-conventional relationships, decided to have an abortion, joined a political party . . . "If you have access to letters written to and by your mother which are relevant to this area, we would be really pleased if you would send us copies. If you want letters returned (send sae) or confidentiality, this will of course be respected. Finally, if you haven't written such a letter to your mother, why not write one . . ." Contact Alison Watt; Karen Payne, 45 Ashley Rd, London N19.

Have Books, Will Travel
"The Women's Liberation Book-bus is now on wheels. Are you organising women's events – meetings, festivals, conferences, exhibitions? We are available to do bookstalls at these or in your local community. Please write to us at 13 Aubert Park, London N5."

Women's Teaching Collective
A group of women teachers of English as a second or foreign language have "set up a centre in London where women who do not speak English as their first language can learn it in a non-sexist non-racist atmosphere. We will provide English lessons, and a place where women can meet, bring their children, talk together, and support each other." Details from Melanie (01-278 8702 evenings) or Julienne (01-499 2051 day).

Maxwell House Short Story Competition
To enter you must be female, born in the republic or the North of Ireland and over 16 years on 1 September '78. Up to three

entries allowed, each no longer than 8.000 words, in English and typewritten. Prizes: £100, £50, and publication in 1979. Writers who have already anthologies of stories or novels published will not be eligible. Write off for competition entry form to Arlen House – the Women's Press, 2 Strand Rd, Baldoyle, Dublin 13, Ireland.

Sisterwrite
This co-operative women's bookshop which opens on 30 November (Mon-Fri: 11.00-7.00; Sat: 10.00-6.00) is a non-profit making service by women. They are at 190 Upper St, London N1 (01-359 2573), and sell British and American books, pamphlets, journals and records of interest to women.

FUN AND MUSIC

History Workshop Journal Benefit
17 November. Social 7.30 at Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis St, London SE1. With Frankie Armstrong and others. Refreshments. Entrance £1.

Women for Wages for Housework
1 December. Social evening 8.00-12.00 at 38 Powis Sq, London W11. Discussion with Vicky Meminger from Black Women for Wages for Housework, and Wages Due Lesbians (USA), film, poetry, drink, and music. Bring a bottle. Women only. Details from Wages Due Lesbians (01-624-6364)

Feminist Review Christmas Bizarre
9 December. 11.00-4.00 at the Drill Hall, Chenies St, London WC1. Jumble, nearly new, film show, auction, crafts, Mother Christmas, bookstalls, and kids' things. Entrance 20p (unwaged 5p, kids free).

Women's Festival
Until 10 December. At the Midland Group, 24-32 Carlton St, Nottingham (entrance in Warser Gate). Films, plays, and discussions on women's writing and publishing, photographic exhibition, performance art and during the final weekend the Women's Liberation Bookbus will be selling books on all aspects of women's lives. Creche available. A detailed programme of daily events is available from the Midland Group as above.

Vocal Workshop
15-17 December. At Dartmouth House, Dartmouth Row, London SE10. An exploration of using the voice for beginners and non-beginners, singers and non-singers, women and men, run by Frankie Armstrong. £12.60 residents (full board); 75p per day for non-residents (meals extra). Details from Frankie Armstrong (01-673 6780) and Sheila Miller (01-261 8195).

Rights of Women
28 January. Event starting 6.00 with films, plays, bands, booze, food, and disco, to cheer women up during mid-winter blues. Details and legal advice for women from ROW: Tue, Thur 7.00-9.00 (01-278 6349).

ART

Women's Gallery
The gallery at the Women's Arts Alliance is the only women's gallery in the country. They want to extend it and "establish a realistic policy geared to majority needs". They meet Mondays 6.00. If you cannot come, write in with ideas. As a guide the collective has drawn up some questions; should the gallery be open to men? What selection system if any should be followed? Should there be a bias towards feminist art? Should there be classes/seminars to support artists? A cafe collective has also started, so that now there is a small basic vegetarian cafe for women in the Women's Arts Alliance. Go and eat cheaply from 5pm onwards (weekdays) or help. Contact the WAA, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1.

27 November-16 December. Exhibition 2.00-10.00 weekdays and 2.00-6.00 weekends at the WAA as above. Paintings and drawings of the space by June Redfern.

Video Performance
1 December. From 4.00 in the White Room at the Slade School of Art, University College, Gower St, London WC1. Self-adornment ritual between two women shown by Catherine Elwes and Mary Budden.

FILMS

Astrid Proll Benefit
18 November. 5.00 (mixed) and 8.00 (women only) at the WAA as above. Showing *Shirin's Wedding* made by Helma Saunders (Ger). Entrance £1 (50p unwaged).

NAC Benefit
10 December. 1.00 at the Scala Cinema, 25 Tottenham St, London W1. Showing *Shirin's Wedding*. Entrance £1.60 (£1.10 unwaged).

PUBLICATIONS

*** On the Social Construction of Femal Sexuality**
Writing in 1973 before the Feminist Freud Revival, Stevi Jackson maintains that sexuality has to be understood in relation to its social context; sex roles, marraige, romance, etc. She tackles the fundamental question: is our sexual development "organically determined and fixed by heredity" (Freud) or socially constructed from birth. She argues that no experience, not even orgasm, is inherently sexual, but becomes so as we learn, and apply society's interpretations to our behaviour.
60p from WRRC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. **Sara Rance**

The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement
Gorgeous typography and design in this pamphlet; produced for the Right to Vote exhibition at the Glasgow People's Palace, it's also a catalogue of the museum's permanent women's history collection. Elspeth King traces the special situation of Scottish women to the Calvinist terror, where the death penalty applied to any adulteress, any midwife who assisted an unmarried mother, and to the 4,000 burned as witches. Militant feminist organisations were extremely active: "Mrs Pankhurst, Mrs Despard (of the Women's Freedom League), Mrs Pethick-Lawrence and Mrs Billington Greig were as well known in Glasgow and Edinburgh as they were in London". The constitutional suffragists were also strongly represented, and there were interesting links with Scandinavian feminists who won the vote so many years before the rest of Europe.
75p from the People's Palace, Museum, Glasgow Green, Glasgow Scotland.
Amanda Sebestyen

The Do-It-Yourself Nursery
This booklet gives outlines on financing, staffing and managing a nursery, and specific examples of different day nurseries set up in the London area – but it could happen anywhere. It also details furniture and equipment and has a useful listing of books and contacts. It *is* very short, but full of practical and helpful advice.
47p from Myra Garrett, 11 Trendell House, Dod St, London E14.
Susan Hemmings

From *The Do-It-Yourself Nursery*

Welfare Rights: The Local Authorities' Role
Anne Howard analyses the administration of welfare benefits, the problem of the enormous non take-up of benefits, and she argues for the local authorities to take responsibility for a welfare rights service. She systematically goes through all the obvious problems in the present system, and suggests that the reform most likely to bring about any real change is a system whereby ' the technique of income assessment developed for taxation were applied both to levying taxes on those whose income came above a specified level relative to family size and to paying benefits to those whose incomes came below it". However, she then chose to argue for the most minimum change, a statutory welfare rights service, since within the present system "personal contact holds the key" towards full take up of benefits . . .

While highlighting many of the problems, like poverty, stigma, worker/claimant relationships, she neglects to say how any of these would be changed or how welfare rights services, whether voluntary or statutory, actually will increase take-up. The reform that she argues for does not threaten the system at all, in fact it legitimises it even more; the fact that people know what 'charity' they are entitled to does not help much in the DHSS office, when they are begging for it.
£1.95 from Bookpoint Ltd, 78 Milton Trading Estate, Abingdon, Oxon.
Louise Marsden

*** Lunatic Ideas – How the Newspapers treated Education in 1977**
It comes as no surprise that most of the education stories that hit the headlines in 1977 were about sex ("Teacher who made me a Sex Pet") or 'falling standards' ("Get back to those Three R's"). This fascinating book examines in detail each of the national papers' attitudes towards schools and teachers – most interesting of all is the study of the *Guardian*, which considers itself above rubbishy sensationalism, but manages to publish exactly the same stories, while going on about morals in its leaders. Of interest to everyone who reads the papers and fumes.
£1.95 published by The School Without Walls and The Corner House Bookshop. **SH**

Cracks
Lilian Mohin's enlightening, gasping, fighting words . . . poetry – talking truth "C'mon guts, why don't you flip?" – about self sufficiency, feeling passionate about women, and feminism. Subvert your aunt, mother, sister, daughter; buy them one of these beautifully produced booklets for Christmas.
60p + postage from Onlywomen Press, 232 Mare St, London E8.
AB

*** Slate – Feminism and Architecture issue**
Two main themes are presented: how women survive in this chauvinist profession and evidence from antiquity of women's contribution to spatial organisation. While the former is depressingly familiar, the latter is intellectually stimulating, but both avoid the crucial issue of contemporary woman's interaction with her environment. How far can professional interpretation of our needs produce a humane environment? Are such insights better assisted by women architects? Such questions must be answered by developing new practice to accompany new theory.
Slate July/August '78, 25p from NAM, 9 Poland St, London W1.
Gail Chester

* Available from PDC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Add 15% postage.

FEMINISM USA Part Four: ROBIN MORGAN

Robin Morgan graduated from the anti-Vietnam war movement to WITCH (Women's International Conspiracy from Hell), a women's group for "the Young, the Hip, the Left". They put a spell on the New York Stock Exchange, and released white mice at a Bridal Fair – "which of course scared and humiliated the brides and their mothers, not to mention the extent to which it scared and humiliated the mice". But a deepening commitment to other women led to a complete break with the Left, and the 1970 essay "Goodbye to All That" was a manifesto of radical feminism. As editor of *Sisterhood is Powerful,* the first anthology of writings from women's liberation, Robin Morgan set up the Sisterhood Fund to plough the profits back into the movement. Most of the early '70s were spent as a travelling speaker and organiser.

She has written two books of poetry. The first, *Monster,* was banned in the UK, Australia and Canada because of a poem accusing Ted Hughes of Sylvia Plath's murder, but feminists in those countries brought out pirate editions of their own. *Amanda Sebestyen* met Robin Morgan in 1972, and helped to publish *Monster* in England.

For the last year Robin Morgan has been working at *Ms,* the mass-circulation feminist magazine that is regarded by some of the women's movement as a liberal sell-out, but is also under attack from the Right.

I'm feeling very optimistic. There is a good feeling now since the Houston convention (*reported in SR68 by Leah Fritz*) – not naive, not saying "Oh, isn't this wonderful, we came up with a platform. And the prayers will help". What really emerged was a kind of network of communication that has not existed among women in this country before. Women came who had never been involved in the women's movement, in politics or anything of the sort. They came because they were angry about a traffic island on the corner for their kids, or a job, or because they'd been raped. They discovered that feminists were against pornography, and that was a big shock – the stereotypes that went out of the window on a thousand different occasions were incredible. And they exchanged numbers. That's going to have results that we won't see for a while.

A marvellous example of this kind of woman, to the *n*th power, is Corinne Horbel. She became involved with the Minnesota Democratic Farm Labor Party – which is their Democratic Party – a few years ago. She had always done volunteer work. And she decided she didn't really like what they were doing about women. And – she formed a feminist caucus in the DFL of which the bottom line, in order even to belong to the feminist caucus, *had* to be abortion rights. (You have to remember the half of Minnesota that's not Catholic is orthodox Lutheran.) Because she was such a power in State politics, she was recently appointed US representative to the United Nations International Commission on the Status of Women. She was sworn in on Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Bible (*The Women's Bible, a complete rewriting by the leading 19th century American feminist).* Andy Young didn't know what that was he was swearing her in on, not till afterwards.

I look at somebody like her, or Eleanor Holmes Norton whom I first met almost 15 years ago when she was counsel to the black women's liberation committee of SNCC (*the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, radical wing of the black civil rights movement*). We have been teargassed together. She now heads the Equal Opportunities Commission, and I would stake my life that she is not selling out. What she has done is completely revamp the entire thing, give it teeth, give it local store-front offices and cut the red tape.

There seems to be a big question here for me – perhaps because it's such an overwhelming one for us in England – that is money. I'm not quite clear how going to Houston is actually going to get that money out of the government to set up childcare centres and all the things we need. I'm also not clear how far American women's situation is changing financially. From what I've read it seems that women's salaries are exactly the same proportion of men's salaries as before?

Or even worse. There's been an astonishing narrowing between the salaries of black and working class men, and the salaries of white and middle class men. And I don't put a huge amount of stock in the government responding to Houston by giving money to childcare centres. It's going to be a rough four or five years in this country. But I think women like Horbel and Eleanor Norton are making waves that are real.

What radical feminists need to do is give them leverage. As long as people are not out on the streets, *they* are out on a limb. So I think we are going to need to redevelop street tactics. Someone asked, "What do you think will happen if the Equal Rights Amendment fails?" and I heard myself saying, "I'm going to call for massive acts of civil disobedience all across this country." But what I think is markedly different from the street politics of the '60s is that we are becoming a majority movement, and now have some sister-travellers inside the system – who are not just getting their piece of the pie. I'm hopeless, you see; I still think we're going to win! If you even look at the kind of groups that came together over the Equal Rights Amendment or the Houston convention, they're a feminist winner's dream. They range from the Girl Scouts of America to radical lesbians, and black groups and Chicana groups.

There's still a heartening rhetoric of change in women's lives over here, but at the same time everything I read in American papers claim that militancy belongs to the '60s and a kind of collective adolescence. And now we're all grown up and contented.

No. That's what they very much want us to think.

Is it really not happening on a personal level, then? What about this "Rebirth of Romance" the papers go on about?

A large NO.

But you are "coming out" in a much more unashamed way as a married person! Aren't you?

That started a good three years ago. I just got bored of shuffling. God knows I'd never tried to hide this grown male person and this small male person in my life. But I began being able to affirm it more. It seemed an incredible political lie not to do it, for my sake and for the sake of a lot of women who felt the same way. I hoped in my recent work to come to a position where to affirm a relationship with a man that was complex and longlasting and a struggle relationship would not be seen, Please - Help! – to put down anyone who was *not* in a relationship with a man.

I think the movement is surviving a series of over-dos. A subject would come up and immediately we'd shoot it to a kind of polar position, whether it was lesbian separatism, spirituality, whether it was "the only feminist has to be a mother" or anti-mother. Name your issue, and there were people ready to kill for it! In the past year or so, there's been

a strange maturation, which is pleasant, and which permits a dialogue on somewhat of a more civilised and important level, which, if we're going to try and bring about the kind of change we're talking about, we're going to need.

I tried to say this in the "Rites of Passage" piece (*in MS, 1975*): "The greater the concert pianist, the less she plays on one note". I want to see the feminist movement nationally and internationally able to manipulate electoral politics and labour politics and street politics. And also have a culture.

I sometimes feel a bit frightened by the pluralism of your movement. Particularly in New York I see rather a peculiar kind of coalition between female spirituality and the feminist culture that was thrown up at the beginning of the women's movement, with female entrepreneurism, women going into politics and making other kinds of careers for themselves. I'm not against most of it, it just doesn't add up to what I hoped for from the women's movement. I get the feeling something's been left out.

It doesn't add up to it; but it's *part* of the total.

Perhaps our situation in England forces us into more definite political alignments. We are under quite a threat from the organised Right, and a lot of the euphoria of building alternative institutions is looking precarious. Even women in England who are much more separatist than me would still see themselves – well, as part of the Left would be a funny way of putting it. But never as part of the establishment.

Those choices, those choices!

I know lots of radical feminists in America don't see their politics in terms of those choices at all, see themselves as fighting in a dimension which is totally different. But I don't think many in England can afford to.

Is that why you said when we met that we'd become very different, and this would be a struggle session?

Partly, yes. Partly, also, I gathered for you women's biology was very important. You were talking about aggression as connected to men's hormone levels when I was here last.

Those are interesting experiments. But that emphasis on biological difference mainly seemed necessary at a certain point as corrective. It's almost like: thesis is, men and women are different and men are better; and antithesis would be your first basic feminist position: Heavens no, there is no difference whatsoever, women are really just like men. But notice the shift – not vice versa. It's your professional woman, your business type of woman. She really just wants to be a boy! And my position was an attempt to correct that.

I feel the biggest difference between you and me personally is that I'm an atheist, while so much of your writing is about matriarchal religion and metaphysics.

It blows my mind when I hear you say that. How did it get abroad that I am not an atheist? What I mean by "matriarchy" or the Wiccean (*witchcraft*) tradition, and what others mean, is not necessarily the same.

Does that mean you don't feel close to the Matriarchists or to Womanspirit *or any of the other spirituality tendencies?*

Not particularly. I think it's fine they do what they do, but it's not what I meant particularly. Have you read *Going Too Far*? – "I am an atheist who prays most commonly and devotedly through art."

I am learning.
The cord is wrapped about my throat.
I am learning.
The passageway is cramped and blind
I am learning
though Kali dances through it, past
where Demeter still seeks Persephone,
where Isis searches for the fragments of Osiris,
where I wade upstream through a living current
which seizes me and drowns me into life,
pumping, pumping, as from a giant heart
whose roar I have called Mother in my dreams.

From "The Network of the Imaginary Mother"

To me the Wiccean tradition has always been extremely interesting in terms of a very real existing history. They existed politically, they existed culturally and medically. We have not done the hard research to go with what are almost cliches. And I am a poet, that's the thing that keeps me alive. The entire tradition of matriarchy and goddess worship is extremely rich with metaphor, imagery and symbol, in a way not unlike the patriarchal Christian tradition as a wonderful source for those artists. That is the way I have always used this material – anthropologically, historically; and metaphorically, aesthetically.

Part of me feels guilty for being one of the people who tried to start rediscovering this tradition in the women's movement. I felt we did not have the kind of emotional and visionary meld that, say, the Civil Rights movement had. It was an attempt to provide symbols which would activate people – not drop them out.

I used to do a lot of pushing for a women's culture, a new lifestyle, frames of reference outside the traditional Left. The last few years have quite disillusioned me with that. If I were somebody in power I'd be very happy that American women were talking to trees instead of in the streets talking to people. And I'd feel very happy that people had so many new bars to go to instead of the street.

Everywhere I go I keep seeing the same lesson. It is settling for polar thinking. If it has been a joyless correct line, imitative of the male Left, there's a ricochet – shazzam! – everybody immediately takes off her shirt and goes dancing beneath the moon. Things get divided up, so that people who are talking to trees go – "Aagh! That's puerile political activity to go round talking to people on the streets". And the people who are talking to people on the streets are doing so in a rhetorical and dull and boring fashion, because they don't want at all to sound remotely like those NUTS who are off there poetically talking to trees. And consequently it drives me bonkers. I'll talk to whatever sentient matter I can get my voice toward. That's the reason I'm at *Ms* magazine.

When I was speaking and travelling, I kept coming across women whose lives had been changed by *Ms*. One out of every six women who pick up the magazine at a newsstand do so for the very first time, and it's the first piece of feminist *anything* they have ever read. I gather that *Spare Rib* is much more for the movement?

Well, no. We don't have 20,000 members in the movement in England. We think of ourselves as an outreach magazine, too, though there are differences.

For the first two years after *Ms* came out I was very purist; I didn't like the ads, and I felt they were jumping on the bandwagon. But I decided that if there were ways I was discontented with the magazine I could not afford to conveniently snarl and sneer, I ought to try to change them. *Ms* is not a monolith. I used to sit around here and say "Yugh!! the ads!" And then one afternoon you run into a woman from the advertising department in tears because she's just spent 40 minutes on the phone shuffling to get sexist ad copy changed – and she has shuffled and shuffled, and she's won. The ad copy has been changed, the ad *policy* of the company has been changed; and she goes and throws up in the bathroom! And you think, oh God, and I'd been going around thinking they didn't care.

Ms is a big target for the Right. The anti-ERA, anti-abortion groups with their computerised mailing lists, they target something and then their advertisers start a boycott. Two distributors refused to carry the "Sexual Harassment on the Job" issue. And every time that sort of thing happens: a story on lesbian mothers – and Vermont school boards refuse to have it in their libraries; a story on pelvic self-examination – and New Hampshire bars it from the newsstands.

So Ms makes stands that are courageous and risky, which may not be evident to hard core movement people. At times I still tear my hair and stomp. But then every other editor here does the same!

Lady of the Beasts, *a book of Robin Morgan's poems, and* **Going Too Far,** *a ten-year anthology of feminist essays with a contemporary commentary, were published by Random House in 1976 & 1977, at $8.95 and $10 respectively.*

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● FULL TIME WORKER required for Oxford Women's Aid Refuge. Start Feb, salary £2750. Driver preferred. Send sae for details: 76 Fairacres Rd., Oxford. Closing date 11 December.

● NOTTINGHAM WOMEN'S AID require 1 full-time or 2 part-time workers. Must be interested in National Women's Aid Federation. Experience of Women's Aid preferable. For further details please write PO Box 20, Nottingham.

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needs an employment worker to work on women's issues such as low pay, equal pay, discrimination and health & safety at work. Knowledge of employment law and experience of working in or with trade unions would be helpful.

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● Experienced printer required to work full time at the Islington Community Press. Write for details: 2a St. Pauls Road, London N1.

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Further information and application forms may be obtained from Mr J.M. Butterfield, PO Box 1, Blackburn House, Bond Gate, NUNEATON Warwickshire CV11 4DB.
Informal interviews will be arranged in the areas concerned and the final date for the receipt of applications is the 10 November 1978.

or as soon as possible after that date.

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Commuting feminist seeks accommodation, Belsize Park area. Maidenhead 27989 after 7pm.

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wanted

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● Needed — information on women in media for project: Lesley, 4a Dirkhill St., Bradford.

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● WOMEN'S LIBERATION LITERATURE or any books. Send sae for free booklist to: H. Rutovitz, 31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh.

● SAPPHO lesbian/feminist magazine. 50p including post. Basement, 20 Dorset Square, London NW1. Meetings Tuesdays, 7.30pm, Chepstow Pub, Chepstow Place, London W2.

● THE COMING AGE: magazine of the Goddess religion. 35p. 40 St. John St., Oxford.

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● DIRECTORY OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES lists many such groups, £1.50 (cash with order please) from The Teachers (SR2), 18 Garth Rd., Bangor, N. Wales.

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groups

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● MILL HILL Area feminist CR group looking for new members, phone Lynne 959 7583.

● CHESTERFIELD AREA interested in refuge for battered women, phone Laura, Wirksworth 3760.

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groups

- CARDIFF new CR group starting up. Contact Maggie at 499759.
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travel

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Further details are now available from:
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contacts

- Women's Rugby — anyone interested? Contact Mary Jane 01-946 6174.
- Lesbian seeks tall butch 20/30s for growing relationship. Ring 828 5360 (London).
- Would the other Spare Rib reader in SPONDON DERBY like to get in touch? Jayne, 63092.
- Isolated feminist working in Walthamstow wants to meet people free lunch-time. Ring 348 5118 after 4.30pm.
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- GAYCHAT (Les-line) Mon-Fri 6pm till 11pm. Sat-Sun 2pm till 10pm. 0423-501607.
- PRINTING? We are a women's co-op printing magazines, posters and pamphlets. Estimates and Catalogue from Mosside Community Press, 21a Princess Road, Manchester 14. Tel 061-226 7115.
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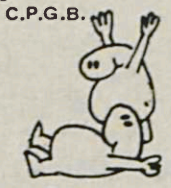

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REVIEWS

MUSIC

Bette Midler
In concert at the London Palladium

There aren't many performers whose fans range from camp gays to respectable Jewish mums and dads, straighter than straight dating couples to lesbian feminists – but this is the audience Bette Midler played to and she seemed to seduce them all. With her razzmatazz warmth, brilliant timing and extraordinary energy, she's very hard to resist. Better judged in the flesh than on record or film, she is above all a live entertainer, a total professional who responds to and knows how to use an audience to the full.

The act itself is a blend of stand-up comedy – jokes about half-mast erections, the royal family, old Sophie Tucker routines – superb visual gags (Midler as an aged singing mermaid whizzing across the stage in an electric wheelchair) and schmaltzy song.

As a singer I found her annoyingly disappointing. She liberally helps herself to other people's songs (Dylan, Piaf, be-bop and Judy Garland), doesn't rework them in a particularly original way, and her voice isn't strong enough to stand out on its own merits. She has a lovely raw and gutsy quality which *could* save her, but this gets drowned by her constant lapses into sentimentality.

Which is pretty much how I felt about the whole act. I was wowed by the woman herself, but the material was often trivial and slight. Her delivery is immaculate, but in the end her humour seemed just a string of unfocussed gags, with the odd anti-arab titbit thrown in for her Jewish fans, and jokes about English women not using douches "which may account for the high level of homosexuality in the audience" tossed in for the gay men.

A shame, because her talent for comedy is enormous. I loved her most when the jokes had bite, were half-directed against herself, half against the audience. Most irritating was the corn, the dishonest nostalgia; her playing an alkie tramp, using her marvellous clown-like mime to make us laugh, taking us to the edge of realising what being down and out must be like . . . the band ceasing to play, total silence, the audience slightly squirming . . . and then breaking the tension by simply splaying her legs to reveal a black satin crotch. A huge belly-laugh from the audience, everything's OK, 's just entertainment, and we can all giggle happily through her singing "I've got nothing but a six pack of beer and my memories".

As for her choice of pap-songs like 'Going to the Chapel of Love', I could never work out how much she was deliberately parodying, how much genuinely going for the memory lane goo. The gay men in the audience seemed to relish them as a parody of heterosexism, the misty-eyed dating couples as being for real, and I decided just to get off on the sheer show-biz of it all.

As she finished off on 'I shall be released', singing in Gospel-like pain and ecstasy and crawling orgasmically across the stage, I became more confused than ever. I wanted to see her really let rip instead of faking it on a Friday night at the London Palladium. But by the time she made her exit, I too was standing up to cheer.

Eileen Fairweather

When I Dream
Crystal Gayle
(United Artists)

Crystal Gale first received recognition in this country last autumn with her single 'Don't it make my brown eyes blue', which successfully crossed the borderline of pop and country music. In this, her fourth album, she comes across packaged like a Revlon advert, all long brown hair and discreet lip gloss, passively sexual and therefore unthreatening.

Although she undoubtedly has a beautiful voice the album is ultimately boring. The material explores the well worn subjects of love, unrequited love and lost love, with a total lack of insight, humour or imagination. The singer is constantly the victim of her man's actions. Passive, just like the cover suggests.

In appealing to the easy listening market, country music loses all the raunchy humour of singers like Dolly Parton. It's so slick it will tax neither your ears nor your brain. The best tracks are the old classics like 'Cry me a river', and 'Some day soon'; though in the latter our heroine finds herself once again at the mercy of a man who "loves his doggone rodeo as much as he loves me". My advice to Worried Brown Eyes of Nashville is that she finds herself a new interest in life: evening classes in car maintenance perhaps?

Dot Garrett

Midler stomping..... Armatrading stretching ..... and Crystal gazing....

To the Limit
Joan Armatrading
(A+M)

Joan Armatrading seems to be currently in the extraordinary position of being Britain's Number One Girl Singer. For someone who's consistently refused to accept the glamorous roles pushed onto women in her place, she's earned a huge following. The most the press can conjure is vague mystery, due to her hanging onto her privacy and refusing to discuss anything but her music. As she reveals little, it's possible to project all sorts of identities onto her – and she says we're welcome to. Perhaps because of this, she's very important to the women's movement. Hearing her albums in feminist households is like finding milk in the fridge.

To the Limit has a lot of the familiar Armatrading features, and some changes. Her superb guitar work appears less often – minus marks from me for that. The arrangements are straighter, more rock and no strings. The strength is in her amazing voice and in her phrasing; it's deceptively simple – until you try singing without her. Who's realised that her lyrics don't even *rhyme*? She writes, mostly, of love and affection and its conflicts, but her analyses go way beyond mere descriptions. I found her earlier lyrics more provocative. There's more here than usual of (unsound!) dependent coupledom, but it retains an incisive awareness of how and why:

You're a lion in my path
in my light
'scuse me . . .

My favourite for a single is 'Taking my baby up town':

There was lots of people in the street
I held your hand, you kissed me
And then all the people started to stare
We started a commotion
Someone making comments
Morals, the state of affairs
And I said, what we've got is the best.

It's no good trying to find out about Joan Armatrading from her songs. She claims that none of the material on *To the Limit* is based on her experience but that it came from other people's. Though she seems uncompromising in some ways, it's disappointing when someone with her influence refuses to make any statement about where she

stands ("I'm no revolutionary, just plain old Joan"). She *is* different; but the status quo will presume she's with them – they're too chauvinistic to respond otherwise than "Isn't she *natural*". Meanwhile we're still being stomped on. I respect that she doesn't want to be a token feminist singer – a restrictive role for anyone. But I wish she'd see how important it is *to us* for those rare sympathisers in power positions to come out as such.

She lost a lot of support when she recorded the title music to the film *The Wild Geese* – a nasty adventure movie about white mercenaries in Africa. I'd like to hear what she has to say about it – Was it a mistake?

Joan Armatrading is the best we – and they – have got. Listen to this LP or the other four and identify, or not, as you choose. She won't mind either way.

Pam Isherwood

THEATRE

AID Thy Neighbour

by Michelene Wandor

One assumption that this play challenges is that a play about "two neighbouring couples who both want to have a child" is about two men and two women. But by giving the lesbian couple a cosy Habitat mortgage, a lifestyle and a set of attitudes that are almost indistinguishable from their heterosexual neighbours, Michelene Wandor reinforces a traditional view of the typical lesbian couple, and this is disappointing from a feminist.

The set is a cleverly-constructed double-image dolls house, reminiscent of a television sit-com, where we can watch both households at once, in bed and in their living-rooms. In the first scene, the two respective breadwinners are compared as they both come home from a hard day's work, demand cossetting from the 'housewives', then storm off to the pub when they don't get what they want.

Both the women who want to get pregnant, Georgina and Mary, spend their days at home preparing for the happy event – and though Mary knits baby clothes while Georgina, who calls herself a lesbian feminist, reads *Of Woman Born*, one can't help feeling that we are being forced to see Sandy as a surrogate husband for her lover, Georgina.

In spite of this, the play deals with Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID) in an often very funny and comfortingly matter-of-fact way, and when they find out through a mutual friend that a woman journalist is looking for scandal about lesbians and AID, everyone is outraged. Sandy and Georgina trick her into a situation where they can blackmail her into calling off her 'investigation'.

Though some of the humour, especially at the beginning of the first act, is a little strained, Sara Boyes as the journalist gets slowly drunk in a hilariously convincing scene where the humour is at its best.

For a play which is billed as thought-provoking it's a shame that so much of the thinking happens off-stage. Neither of the women talks much about the decisions she has made, and every time the question is asked, "But why do you want a child?" the answer is dodged by a joke about feminine instincts. But an interesting change-of-heart at the end leaves you realising that something new and interesting has been said in a refreshingly unpolemical way.

Sally Collings

AID Thy Neighbour *is part of the Women's Project '78, which started at the Theatre at New End, Hampstead (London), and is continuing at the Oval House, Kennington (London) with* Confinement, *a play by Kate Phelps, about women in prison.*

Evita

by Tim Rice

Evita, the musical now playing to packed audiences at the London Prince Edward Theatre after an exhaustive build-up of American-style publicity and promotion, is sadly a let-down. If it were only the "documentary political theatre" that its American director Hal Prince had promised, it could have been provocative and inspiring. Consider its ingredients for a 1978 smash hit: the story of a courageous revolutionary woman, a working-class actress who became wife of the President at 26 and died 6 years later, whose story unfolds in the nostalgically fashionable decade of the '40s and it all takes place in Argentina, of recent World Cup fame.

But not only is author Tim Rice totally insensitive to the present reality in Argentina where the infamous Military Junta is violating all human rights in its attempts to destroy the popular Peronist Movement, he has also bungled the whole thing in his determination to portray Evita as a megalomaniacal whore. This in spite of the fact that he admits: "There are things to admire about Eva Peron the person – her determination to succeed against almost insuperable odds, her championing of women in a male-dominated society, her championing of her class in a class-dominated society, her courage in illness and in death, and not least her physical appearance." But he brings none of this into his musical, even the last comment is not relevant to the fictitious character he has created: Elaine Page's Evita is a hard-faced tart, portraying none of the real Evita's beauty, that of a woman of spirit passion and simplicity.

In the musical, the characters range from the outright baddies, such as Eva and Peron, to the thoroughly objectionable, such as Che Guevara, portrayed as the constant nagging critic with a swagger and a speech defect. ("We've all gone cwa-a-azy" he croons.) All this is a great shame, because it is time we knew more about Evita, after all she gave women the vote in 1947, founded the women's branch in the Peronist Movement and remains an inspiration to the thousands of Argentine women who continue to struggle today for their liberation and that of their country. There is really no mystery about her: she was loved by the people because she stood by them, and loathed by her enemies, the former rulers of the country, the landowning oligarchy and the reactionary sectors of Argentine society. In the musical, their hatred is hurled at Evita in the song 'Dangerous Jade': "Her only good parts are between her thighs./She should stare at the ceiling and not reach for the skies".

But when the whole musical incorporates this hatred, we are left with distortion trapping itself in its own incongruities and lies. The final dying scene of Evita is a hollow anti-climax, by then one has stopped hoping to have any real interest awakened in this distorted characterisation. Maybe the musical will somehow awaken an interest in the real Evita who is so relevant to the struggle of the Argentine people today, who remember her words: "With or without blood, the race of the exploiting oligarchy will die in this century".

Jan Humphries

The show is booked up until the end of the year.

This review appears without the co-operation of the Genista Streeton Publicity Agency who are responsible for the handling of press tickets for Evita *. . . they have steadfastly refused to issue* SR *with review tickets.*

Outrageous!

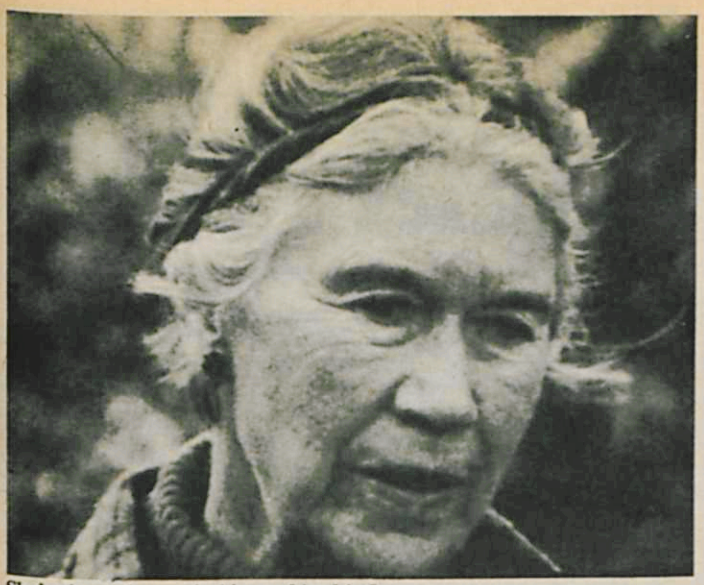
FILMS

Outrageous!
directed by Richard Benner
(Miracle Films)
The Devil's Cleavage
directed by George Kuchar
(Respectable Films)

You might hear the terms 'camp', 'crazy', 'star struck' and the like applied to *Outrageous!* and *The Devil's Cleavage* and think they had something in common. Well, they don't: in fact, they offer a total polarity of attitudes and approach.

For starters East Coast based *Outrageous!* comes straight from the Hollywood stable; funny and charming, it's quite acceptable enough for your parents. It charts the success of a sentimental relationship between a young schizophrenic, Liza, and a closet gay hairdresser, Robin. There's very little plot, just a couple of excellent performances (Hollis McLaren and Craig Russell), some wonderful one-liners and several great star impersonations when Robin finally 'comes out' in drag. However, it's indicative of the nature of popular seduction that the film should find it possible to beg totally any exploration of its own premises: what is the nature of drag? Is it a serious means to open up a rigid morality or does it ultimately and insidiously reinforce sexual stereotyping? And how about the equation sick woman/gay male however sympathetic they may be?

Cleavage on the other hand, makes its 'stars' pretty gross, offering camp as the parody of us all. Here the plot is convoluted and endless (literally), following in epic proportions the frantic peregrinations of one Nurse Ginger, paying homage to past masters of Hollywood en



She's always been a lesbian – *Word is Out*

route. Sparing none the acerbity of its humour, the men are inane whilst the women are daubed travesties of the glamorous notion, unable to discard corsets and cosmetics. But at least in this most late, late night of films with its anger, gags and paranoia, the destructiveness of escapism is faced: literally in the relentless nightmarish movement; figuratively in the attitudes: "if you make me decent I can't go out into the streets immune to shame". And where I started out feeling uncomfortable and suffocated I finished uncomfortable but stimulated, ready to start all over. Well, almost.

Helen MacKintosh

Outrageous! *is currently showing at the Kensington Odeon (London), and* The Devil's Cleavage *will be on late night at the Scala (London) until the end of November.*

Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives

by Mariposa Film Group

(Scala/The Other Cinema)

This American film is a compilation of interviews with 26 lesbians and gay men. It is obvious that it was made to show gay lifestyles to heterosexuals and as such is a breakthrough, but that in itself is not enough.

"I feel a responsibility to the other weird people of the world to be a representative intelligent weird person" said Roger. Surely we can do without such self-oppression – this merely reinforces the heterosexual viewers' conviction of our abnormality. If you were thinking of creeping out of the closet to catch this film, forget it, it'll probably put you 'straight' back in there.

How can we take seriously a film proclaiming stereotypes as a thing of the past when we are offered an unnerving example of a lesbian couple, one woman very 'masculine' and the other very 'feminine'? The film avoids one of the many challenges that same-sex relationships pose to society – why the need to role-play at all? For us there was no woman we could personally identify with.

The film over-indulged in the past and we were shown what society has done to the lesbian with examples of losing custody of children (although bad editing cut the guts out of that story), witch hunting in the forces, and the 'inevitable cure' . . . the bin.

Instead of portraying the uniting strength of women loving women, the women were shown in isolated situations, edited and spliced at disturbing points which gives a sense of frailty and insecurity. The men on the other hand were presented in a more positive light. The film makers fulfilled their promise of avoiding political analysis by not acknowledging the difference between the struggles of lesbians and gay men, which causes us to ponder the merits of making a film featuring both groups.

Carol, Jean, Lori, Moya, Rosie

Another view

I thought there were some wonderful things in this film. Realise in advance that the people who speak for 'politics' and 'feminism' are really disappointing – liberal Democrats at best. But it's the others, the ones who'd never come to a meeting (not in this country, anyway), who kept me longing for them to get back on the screen. The ex-US Army dyke talking about getting backed into butchness and then purged for it by other lesbians in the big McCarthy "queer scare". The manically camp photographer. The Chicana who just doesn't like men, and whose household with another woman seems to act as a magnet for all the young women of the neighbourhood. Their insights kept me glued.

Expectations were undercut. Just as you think, oh Gawd, not another serene young country-living lesbian chopping down trees, she goes on talking and – whaa? shock treatments? at what age?? And the ageing guy with a toupee who's spent his whole sexual life in toilets and on street corners, seems to be setting up for a tearful confession but says instead: "I'm tired of being told how unhealthy I am". This was what the Gay Liberation Front was about in the first place, that just by speaking out gay people put forward a radical critique of our sexual politics. If this really is a film for straights, it's not too successful judging by the gay audiences at the Scala and at the cinema where I saw it in New York – and they seemed to love it too.

Amanda Sebestyen

Showing at the Scala (London) until the end of November.

Stevie

by Bob Enders

(Enterprise Pictures Ltd)

"People think that I never married because I don't know about the emotions, but they are wrong. I love my aunt." Stevie Smith was a poet who lived with her unmarried aunt in the London suburb of Palmers Green, and commuted every day to an office in the City. Her poetry is playful, innocent, and deadly serious: "Nobody heard him, the dead man./But still he lay moaning:/Iwas much further out than you thought/and not waving but drowning".

I came across Stevie's *Novel on Yellow Paper* when I was still at school and was knocked out by its exhuberance and originality, and especially its satire on the romantic message of the post war 'twopenny weeklies' that once you are married, everything must be all right. She was the first adult I'd come across who mocked marriage. And some of the funniest, warmest parts of the film are the exchanges between Stevie and her aunt on the subject of marriage.

For me the film as a whole was a little too solemn and theatrical. It was made from a play and not successfully transformed into a film. Though lovingly portrayed, more weight was put on Stevie's outward conventionality (her visit to the Queen to receive a gold medal, the representation of all her friends by a single rather establishment 'literary friend'), than on that free spirit which expressed itself not only in her poetry but in the ease with which, in her mid-sixties, she blossomed in anti-establishment poetry happenings, reading alongside American beat poets, Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti, and British writers and musicians such as Adrian Mitchell, Bert Jansch, and Mike Horovitz. Glenda Jackson's portrayal of Stevie was brilliant, but not zany, whimsical or childlike enough for the preconceptions, as a years-long Stevie fan, that I already had.

Don't let my criticisms put you off going. It's a warm, sad, funny film about a woman poet which takes seriously her work, her ideas on life, her need for independence, and the close relationship between her and her aunt – the love between two single women. Go and see it.

Stef Pixner

Currently showing at the Classic Oxford St (London).

BOOKS

The World According to Garp

by John Irving

(Gollancz £5.95)

Novels with explicitly feminist characters are still rare enough to attract attention on that basis alone. When the author is male, the effect, as they say, can be shattering. This year a large section of the US book-buying public has purchased a piece of fiction populated by a feminist founding mother, a former pro football player who changes his sex and joins the movement, a pleasantly self-possessed and highly intelligent wife who supports the hero, and a sect of radical feminists who cut off their tongues in sympathy with a mutilated rape victim. Feminist nirvana in the best seller lists at last? Not exactly, no.

At a recent London discussion on Feminism and the Novel, author John Irving observed that "most of the best art is pessimistic" – a statement which was disturbingly well received by his feminist audience. *Garp* is certainly pessimistic. Marcus Aurelius' stoic presence broods over the chapters of its mid-section, and all – literally all – the main characters die – via an old-fashioned conclusion which carries on past the present into the future until they all drop off. Death, we are interminably (and, yes, movingly) reminded, will get us all in

FLASHBACK

Adamson Collection

Two women hospitalised as schizophrenics painted these pictures during art therapy sessions. They were exhibited this summer at the Digby Stuart College, London, as part of the Adamson Collection – works collected over thirty years by art therapist Edward Adamson, and now in search of a permanent home. Art therapy is used in a variety of settings including special schools, prisons, drug addiction centres and mental hospitals where it is seen as a "medium of communication" allowing "the psychiatric patient to externalise and examine their inner world" (From the catalogue).

The painter had been in hospital for twenty years when she produced these two paintings, and she remained there for another ten. She was 60 years old from a middle class background. The painting on the left expresses the anger she felt towards her doctors, and the one on the right is about her room in the hospital which she described as a prison.

Far Right: This woman who had been a nurse was hospitalised for two years when she was 25 years old. The self portrait "empty headed" relates to her feelings about her father – as long as he was in the picture she felt she couldn't get into it. He is symbolised by the double profiles on the road which represent her view of him as hypocritical and two faced.

the end. So much for pessimism of the intellect, how about some optimism of the will?

In Garp's world, the individual desperately attempts to hold his (sic) own against the undertow: it's the defensive posture of those in charge, rather than the offensive challenge of the powerless. True, the book is adamant in its argument for women's right to "live their own lives" (an individualist nostrum which I don't exactly regard as the apex of political ambition). True, the author regards rape as one of the major constraints to women's individual liberty – and this he renders with fantastic impact. But this liberty is firmly bounded by the pale of familial loyalty – it's not so much that Garp's relatives are forced to be good wives and/or mothers, it's that they *want* to be.

Even Garp's feminist mother, despite her occasional tight-lipped insistence that her son doesn't *understand*, seems closer to him in some fundamental sense than to the women she supports. And when, eventually, the family circle is broken, the violence erupts symmetrically from patriarch and feminist alike – leaving us nervously hugging the middle ground. To paraphrase trade union martyr Joe Hill, "Don't organise. Mourn."

So why comment on such a book in these pages? Because *The World According to Garp* – and those who clamber to buy or borrow it – takes feminism seriously. Seriously enough to vindicate some of its aims – and seriously enough to insidiously undermine others.

Mandy Merck

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Frost in May

by Antonia White

(Virago £1.75)

It's a timely coincidence that in the year when the Catholic Church has received massive publicity through the deaths of two popes, we should be reminded, by two very different novels, of the devastating effect that catholicism has had on the minds and lives of women. Michele Roberts' first novel, *A Piece of the Night* (see *SR* 76) deals with its contemporary manifestations whereas *Frost in May*, first published in 1933, offers a fascinating, chilling and minutely detailed indictment of convent schooling.

The story centres around the initiation and indoctrination of Nanda Grey. Nanda's father is a catholic convert, and at the age of eight she, too, is received into the church. It is one of the novel's strengths that the rigours, class snobbery and horrors are never directly criticised, but merely described with biting clarity through the eyes of a girl who longs only to conform. Nanda is neither rich, titled, nor catholic by birth, qualities which are pre-requisites for true acceptance by the nuns. There is no satisfying denouement. Nanda doesn't lose her faith. In spite – no, because of – her treatment, she will be haunted forever by a sense of guilt and worthlessness which, it seems, are the primary gifts of catholicism to its followers.

Angela Phillips

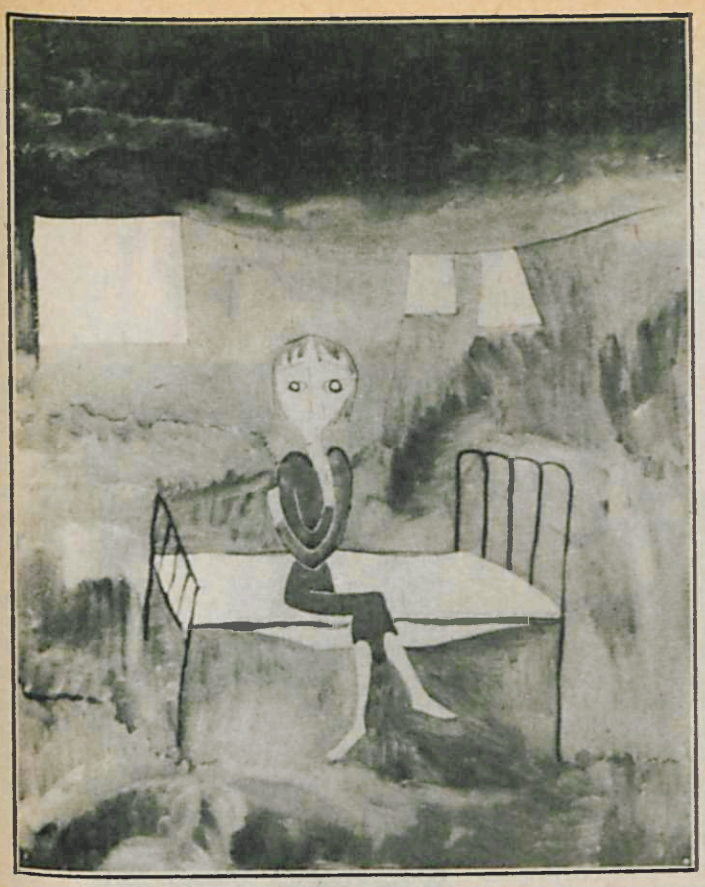
Women and Children First

by Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig

(Gollancz £7.50)

Like certain of its fictional heroines, this book does a bit of everything at high speed, inviting adjectives like "lively" and "racy". The authors are "concerned with the experiences of British women and children" in the last two wars, as portrayed in contemporary and retrospective fiction. Their book dips and flashes dizzyingly over seemingly hundreds of plots and themes – class antagonism, pacifism, love between enemies, evacuation, munitionettes, patriotism – in popular magazines and children's papers too. The myriad writers include Vera Brittain, Elizabeth Bowen, Henry Green and Winifred Holtby, as well as the obscure and the frothy. This book doesn't intend to theorise problems of literary criticism or propaganda, but darts in rapid summaries, ironic and often perceptive asides, social history notes.

Of great feminist interest are the reflections of war-work, "dear housewifeliness", and changing sexual attitudes. Thus *Vogue* 1914, "War Enlarges the Horizon for the Educated Girl and the Woman of Ideas and Modifies Man's Point of View". *Vogue* 1918, "There are few who would not rather have the men than the men's jobs". Or Richard Aldington's character who in 1914 feared a pregnancy, "Elizabeth lost her head entirely. Freud and Ellis went to the devil in a twinkling. No more talk of 'freedom' then!" And Evadne Price on women in war work; "The biggest whore or the biggest saint . . . what the hell does it matter as long as they put up a decent performance behind the steering wheel and can



keep their engines clean? You can't get up to much immorality with dying men, can you?"

Denise Riley

KIDS' BOOKS

The Great Garden Adventure
by Terry Furchgott
(Deutsch £3.25)

A new picture book from Terry Furchgott (author of the non-sexist *Phoebe and the Hot Water Bottles SR* 57) successfully integrates important non-sexist, non-racist and non-class biased features into a credible and exciting urban adventure.

Amanda and Daisy live with their Mum – a very realistic picture of a hard-working single parent – and when on the street as latch-key kids, are spurned by a gang of boys. But they discover a site with a hut and some old tools, and sorting out the overbearing boys form a Garden Gang with them to sow seeds, grow flowers and vegetables and make money. Some colourful, striking pictures show the children all beavering away until the flowers, fruit and veg are ready to pick and sell. For Amanda, Daisy and their Mum this means a proper holiday at last and of course lots of fresh food. Other good features include the kids autonomously getting a gardening manual out of the library and selecting the seeds from an imposing display of packets. Suitable for the 4-8's.

Time to Get Out of the Bath, Shirley
by John Burningham
(Cape £2.50)

After *Come Away from the Water Shirley* (*SR* 61), Shirley continues her adventures in a beautifully illustrated picture book for the under-8's. Here Shirley disappears down the plug hole for an experience of medieval society including jousting with the king. A clever fantasy as well as an enjoyable comforting joke with pictures of very anxious and tidy-minded Mum and Shirley doing her own imaginary thing.

The Chief's Daughter
by Rosemary Sutcliff
(Piccolo 50p)

Jemima and the Welsh Rabbit
by Gillian Avery
(Lions 60p)

Just out in paperback for 7-10 yr olds are two dramatic stories about positive girls by well-known historical novelists.

Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Chief's Daughter* (with Sutcliff's name misspelt on the jacket!) is set "long, long ago" on the Welsh coast at the time of the Irish sea raiders. Nellan, the chief's daughter, decides to defy the tribe and free an Irish captive who is to be sacrificed, thereby endangering her own life.

In *Jemima and the Welsh Rabbit*, set in the 1870's, Jemima Judkins' station master father gets posted to a new job on a small Welsh branch line. Deprived in this quiet country place of the urban gang warfare she loves, Jemima puts her boundless energies into teaching the timid grandson of the railway company owner how to stick up for himself and they end up driving the steam engine away together.

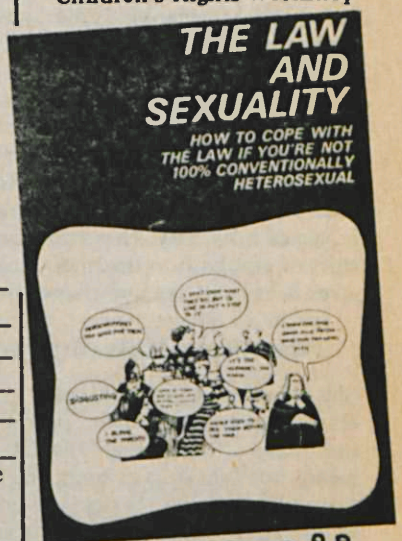
Potteryworker
Newspaperworker
by Sarah Cox and Robert Golden
(Kestrel £2.25 each)

The two latest volumes in the *People Working* photo-information series are as compelling and informative as the previous eight titles. *Potteryworker* has fine pictures of women on the line and applying a range of skills, while *Newspaperworker* explains some of the background to male dominated industries. Suitable for 8+.

Cycling On
by Ray Hallet and John Holder
(Dinosaur 65p)

A National Trust history of cycling that recognises the role of women cyclists in the movement for the emancipation of women. "Any woman who can use a needle and scissors can use other tools as well", wrote a woman cyclist in 1896. For 10 yrs and upwards.

Rosemary Stones
Children's Rights Workshop



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FROM GRASS ROOTS
1 NEWTON ST. MANCHESTER

From writing a *Spare Rib* article on what lies behind the male pin up, Margaret Walters went on to investigate the meanings of the male nude in art history from the Greeks to present day feminist artists. The important and illuminating results of her research are now published in *The Nude Male.*

Griselda Pollock gives her impressions of the book.

the nude male

Naked Self Portrait c1503 Durer "In the self-portrait, Durer confronts, with great courage, all his fears about the flesh. The torso is blocked in in a way that reminds us Durer had studied the antique, but is lined and stooped, and looks tired."

The naked human form has been a central image in Western Art since the Greeks. Indeed it has a special term in art historical language, the nude. In his book on the topic, Kenneth Clark goes to great length to distinguish it from the naked body. The nude has come to be considered a *form* of art, not a *subject* in art, enabling Clark and many others to take the form, the nude, for granted and discuss only its stylistic and iconographic variations, while ignoring its ideological or political meanings. The male nude has been taken for granted as the symbol of mankind; the female nude was considered a body: sexual, erotic. The male stood for all that was cultural, social, or spiritual; the female, physical, sexual, natural. Margaret Walters' book is a challenge both to the notion of the nude as a given form in art and to the male nude as a kind of transcendent image of humanity. Her title marks a shift of emphasis – the nude male. She gives it back its sex and its politics.

. . . the dreaded loss of power

She argues that the nude male has always been about power, patriarchal and phallic. "I am using 'phallus' to mean, not the penis as such, the anatomical organ, but its rich and complex significance." The various representations of the naked male – the Classical Greek athletes and gods, the ravaged Christs and martyred saints of the middle ages, the androgynous and mannered adolescents of the Post Renaissance period, the musclemen of 20th century totalitarian regimes – all are about masculinity. In different ways they are a response to male power, affirmations of it and protection against the dreaded loss of power.

She attempts to place the different form this took within the dominant ideologies of the periods. For example she discusses the Greek athletic, youthful ideal as an assertion of masculine strength and order in which "weakness is suppressed or caricatured because it is feared" and she relates this to the situation of Athens as a city on a permanent war footing. Whereas in Christian art the naked body only slowly finds a place in this iconography and a peculiar one it is too. The supreme image of late medieval and Renaissance Christianity is Christ Crucified, the flesh mortified. This is related to the growing preoccupation with death and the weakness of the body set against the triumph of the spirit. "The ascetic who mortifies – symbolically kills – his flesh, because life means death to the spirit, replaces the athlete as the cultural ideal." The ways she suggests for understanding the meanings 'embodied' in the nude male are less convincing as she treats more modern instances and the question of why the male nude began to disappear, to be replaced by the female nude as the dominant form is not satisfactorily answered.

But it is interesting to note how hostile many reviewers have been to Walters' book, in response, no doubt, to her argument that representations of the male body reveal how unstable is the ideal of masculinity, how its identity is never secure, but shifting, conflicted, fearful of loss of power. Perhaps bringing our attention back to the ideological and in many cases sexual meanings of the very form, the male nude, which has in the modern period been suppressed or repressed, opens up the fears that lie behind that suppression.

making art as a part of history

While I was impressed by many of Margaret Walters' observations and liked some of her insights, I felt uncomfortable with other things. She has tried to do too much and her approaches are often in conflict with one another. For instance, in parts she presents us with a survey of different types of male nude down the family tree of Art History, an approach not unlike that used by Kenneth Clark, although it is done from a different, feminist, point of view. At other times she comes closer to John Berger, who in his book *Ways of Seeing*, radically broke with Clark, and tried to expose the ideology of power and powerlessness which underpins the painting of the nude. I liked her chapter on Michelangelo best of all and in it, she employs yet another approach. She concentrates on one artist's repeated attempts at the nude and she is able to bring to bear on her analysis biographical and psychological material in such a way that her arguments and analyses are detailed, illuminated and convincing. This concentration on one artist's repetitious and obsessive involvement with the image of the male nude thus stands out in contrast to the rest of the book in which the general survey sweeps one too fast through dense areas, or makes readings of images without enough attention to the peculiarities of each artist's work in an inherited tradition.

The problem in these approaches is that we end up with images being seen as representative of their age, or illustrations of a particular ideology, falling back on a notion of art in its context. Now it may seem strange to criticise someone for attempting to see art in this way, especially when so much art history signally fails to give art any context but its own. Making art is inevitably part of history – but in a particular

Left: St. Sebastian c1615 Rubens. Right: Andromeda 1638 Rubens
"Rubens cannot enjoy the sensual fleshiness of the male body, unless it is wounded or dying."
"The heroic nude becomes, in a new sense, a passive sex object; that is as true of the male as it is of the female."

Joe Gould 1933 Alice Neel
"The painting–its dazzling wit hovering on the edge of cruelty–is a biting comment on exhibitionism, arrogance and impotence."

way; it is a historical practice, not a reflection of a society or a period of history. Feminists and marxists are questioning the relationships between an individual artist, a society, an art form, between an inherited tradition, a shifting historical experience and its conflicts and contradictions. It is this questioning which is absent from the book.

One aspect of *The Nude Male* seriously puzzled me. It was not an argument as such put forward by Walters, but an impression that grew on me as I read it. She writes that masculinity is an ideal, constantly strived for and constantly threatened, by what she identifies as a sinking back into passivity, lumpen fleshiness, ie femininity. Walters does not seem to question these categories, masculinity and femininity, but instead she unconsciously reinforces the pejorative connotations of femininity. It would seem that all figures of the male that are not lean, heroic, super virile are threatened by femininity, and by that I think she means passivity, fleshiness. The terms masculine and feminine signify social and cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness. I felt that Walters failed to distinguish between ideological, psychological and anatomical sex differences so that while masculinity is discussed as an ideal, femininity appears as a given, like some primeval ooze into which men might relapse.

Have we, as women, so internalised the hatred of woman's body that we too can talk unquestioningly of dreaded passivity and lumpen fleshiness? "The boy pulls nervously away from the goddess' embrace as if he feared the *infection* of her softness" (my italics). Walters may well be trying to convey by her choice of words the dread she thinks these images expose. However her choice of words taken as a whole through the book seem to implicate her in the notions of femininity which she identifies as the threat to masculinity. I suspect that there are varying ideals of masculinity, and indeed experiences of their bodies that men have, like alternating flaccidity and tautness which might account for the fluctuations in male nudes. If masculinity is itself constantly having to be asserted by a series of images which do not enjoy direct representation of the erect penis, but tend to make the whole body a phallic symbol, the tensions may relate more to erection and softness of men's precious symbol of power. I would, on the other hand, suggest that where dread of woman does inform images of the human body, it is dread of women's lack of phallus, not their insistent softness. And finally, where flesh and softness are relevant, that, I think, is a more precise dread of the mother's body, an ambivalence shared by both male and female children.

subverting notions of the feminine?

To give an example, in a discussion of two paintings by Rubens, one of St Sebastian and the other of Andromeda's rescue by Perseus, Walters argues that Rubens makes the two figures substantially the same – the male becoming feminised. She concludes that because St Sebastian and Andromeda are similarly built and both quite fleshy the "heroic nude becomes the passive sex object". But there are other ways of interpreting this: what about the similarity of treatment stemming not from the collapse of the male into female passivity, but from the similarity of their situations, gazed at for sexual possession, implicit in the Andromeda, and metaphorically in the St Sebastian? Or perhaps the similar effects derive from the way in which Rubens sensualised his medium of oil so that in painting the body, he maximises its tactile qualities. Such an ease with sensuality possibly enables Rubens to contemplate with tenderness, not fear, the female form and experience similar pleasures when he confronts a body of a man. That these two figures appear superficially similar does not have to be explained by an effeminisation of the male body. Instead it is possible that Rubens was actually undercutting the masculine/feminine opposition and subverting negative connotations of the feminine.

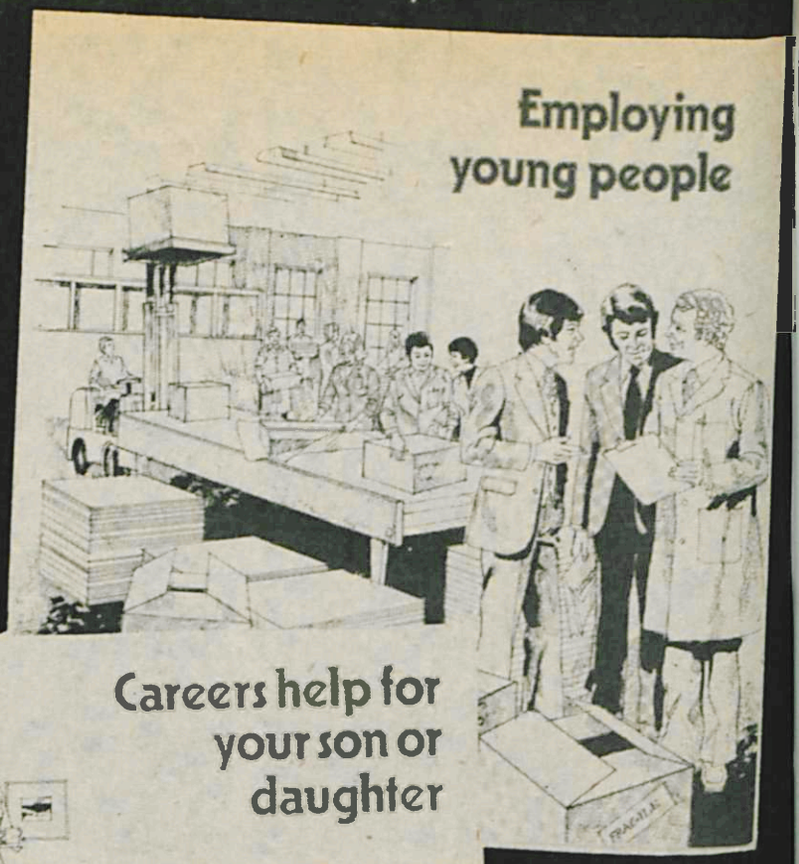
In spite of my reservations, I'm truly glad this book has been written. It is a massive labour and a real contribution to feminist work. But sometimes we actually reinforce sexual polarisations and stereotypes by attempting to analyse issues like masculinity without a wide enough frame of reference. For instance, men's dominance is not only sexual but one of class, and masculinity in the male nude serves to reproduce the dominance of a particular class of man.

Her book is, in the final analysis, stimulating but there are, for me, too many unexamined notions about sexual difference, and how we link art and ideology. Yet, although it angered and disappointed me in parts, it opened up many issues and asked important questions.●

Tooth &Nail

How the Department of Employment envisage employment, unemployment and family life in 1978.

WHO TO ATTACK ABOUT SEXIST ADS:
the manufacturers of the product and/or the agency who make up the ad.
WHO TO COMPLAIN TO:
The Independent Broadcasting Authority for ITV ads and programmes, 70 Brompton Road, London SW9.
The Advertising Standards Authority, although notoriously unresponsive to complaints about sexism, 15 Ridgmount Street, London WC1.
WHO TO WORK WITH:
AFFIRM (Alliance for Fair Images and Representation in Media). A group acting against sexism and offensive stereotyping, can be contacted c/o Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1.
THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS
Send a letter of complaint about sexist material to: The Mother or Father of the NUJ Chapel at the publication concerned, with a copy to the editor, and to the Equality Working Party, NUJ, Acorn House, 314 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.



Leaflets for Careers offices to distribute. Sent in by Hilary Clarke, Liverpool.

If you are unemployed, you will need an 'office' in your home. This should have at least a table, by the telephone (with a pad and pencil always by it), a typewriter if you can type, and a simple filing system for you to keep track of all the posts you have applied for and the companies you have written to, with a method of recording the dates for follow-up.

Try to work normal office hours, and make it clear to your family that these are sacrosanct. You cannot do the job properly if you are on call to mend fuses, clear a blocked sink or fetch the children from school, just because you are on the spot. On the other hand, make sure that your family are properly briefed on how to take calls on your behalf when you are away from your 'office' carrying out essential research or attending interviews.

From booklet sent to unemployed 'professionals' — who obviously all have wives and children — by Professional and Executive Recruitment.

Sterilisation

The number of women wanting sterilisations have at least doubled this year as more and more of us stop taking the pill. We know women everywhere are forced into having sterilisations but what about the women who want the operation? Here we describe the different ways of getting a sterilisation – on the NHS, through BPAS, and the different techniques available – their dangers and advantages. But first Susie Cowen explains why she decided on sterilisation and how she went about it.

Why

For once, it was a considered decision. Marriage had not been, neither had the babies that followed, one a year, in the following two years. My husband turned out to be the companion I'd hoped for since childhood: together we fed the babies and bathed them, scraped the crap off the nappies, got in the shopping, took the wash to the launderette, ironed the work shirts and crawled round searching for dummies at four o'clock in the morning. Our daughters ended up calling us both Mum or Dad – whichever occurred.

We ended up frayed; we fought; but the thing worked. When we found ourselves expecting a third child, conceived through a coil, I spoke bitterly to my husband across the chaos. "This is carrying teamwork *too* far."

It was my first legal abortion, and the first involving this man. For the first time it hurt. The baby was one of our children, and its father's sadness made mine twofold.

At a women's group meeting, a few weeks later, we discussed sterilisation. I refused a lift home, and sorted out my ideas as I walked. I had conceived three times through cap or coil. I was unable to take the pill and this pleased me, for I harboured doubts about long-term use of powerful drugs. The idea of abortion as a last-ditch method of contraception now was all too real: hateful. I arrived at the underlying question – do I really mean all that about going ahead with a proper career once the children are at school? Is pregnancy always to intervene, and if so will each further child serve as an excuse?

Sterilisation How

Mentally I started to list reasons for contemplating a laparoscopy (see box).

The reasoning: first, we had two healthy and cheerful daughters. To keep them so, and to help their development into whole people, would require ungrudging contributions of our time. We would have more time to give if we could keep the numbers down. Second – two years would not feel too long a wait for the children to reach school age and for me to regain my independence, so long as that independence could be guaranteed. Third – a feeling of sexual freedom should make up for the animal envy I experienced at the sight of a small baby in its mother's arms. This envy seemed to be the product of my motherhood, since until then I had felt indifference and even apprehension in the company of other people's children – even though the prospect of going through life without utilising the body's machinery had been alien and fearful. Now that I had children I was content, but the content foundered whenever I came upon a really tiny baby. I wanted one for myself.

I imagined there might be other, hidden responses which would break the surface once I became irrevocably infertile. Would I continue to enjoy sex, or would I feel guilty about its barren outcome? Would I experience problems of identity through this apparent denial of my own femaleness? I guessed not, I appreciated, perhaps rather late, that I could do what I wanted, no matter what I was told.

I would counter the beckoning finger of fertility with commitment to a chosen occupation and I would face any feeling of inadequacy with the engaging idea that I could take a lover literally at any time I chose.

Did I want all that? My infertility could present a barrier to my forming another relationship in the event of widowhood or disaffection. And what if one of our children died? I did not dwell on these possibilities for long. The first two had an extra element of chance, since I had no idea what my reactions might be. The last was too terrible to contemplate with any clarity. After any of these upheavals, I doubted whether I would be ready to have another child before the menopause.

Sterilisation Techniques

Different operations are being developed and doubts are being cast on established techniques. Here we look at the state of sterilisation.

Laparotomy

This is the oldest technique used today. A fair sized incision is made through the abdominal wall in order to sever, crush or tie off the Fallopian tubes which carry the eggs from the ovaries to the uterus. If the tubes are tied there is an extremely slight chance of a tubal pregnancy and anyone having this operation should ask their doctor and hospital to explain fully. A variation on cutting the tubes and tying off each end is to cut them, and embed the end closest to the adjacent tissue and stitch it in place. The operation requires a general anaesthetic and hospitalisation for at least two or three days.

Laparoscopy

A narrow fibre-optic telescope (a lighted pipe-like instrument) is inserted through a small incision in the unconscious woman's abdomen, the tubes are located and then cauterized (burned) with a small instrument entered through another incision. For the operation carbon dioxide gas is pumped into the abdominal cavity to separate the organs and allow the surgeon to see them. This is put forward as one of the advantages of the operation as it enables a general examination of the pelvic organs. A 48 hour stay in hospital is usually required.

Minilaparotomy

In this, a recently developed technique, a 1 - 2 inch incision is made just above the pubic hairline. The tubes are located, sometimes with the aid of a uterine elevator inserted through the vagina, and the tubes are tied. The operation can be done with a local anaesthetic at an outpatients' clinic and requires no stay in hospital. There are several advantages. Because no electric current is used (as in laparoscopy to cauterize the tubes) the risk of burns to organs other than the fallopian tubes is avoided. And because the abdominal cavity is entered by means of a scalpel incision there are no "blind procedures" such as inserting the needle to pump carbon dioxide into the abdomen during laparoscopy, which can be dangerous and has been known to cause carbon dioxide embolism.

Colpotomy

This is sterilisation through the vagina. Some complications, such as damage to other organs, are thought to occur less often with vaginal techniques, but they have a higher failure rate. The FPA do not know of anyone who is performing vaginal sterilisations in

One thing I knew: I *would* be capable of loving someone else's baby, so long as that baby were in my care. Ten years before, as an au pair, I had experienced all the tenderness and irritation I now knew as a mother. So if we really wanted a child we could adopt one.

I began to hurry home, for all this would have to be talked through with my husband. I thought and hoped he would agree with my ideas. We had always agreed on questions like this in the past. That is why I had concerned myself on this walk with my own misgivings and desires: I knew him that well. Even so I began to wonder whether he might not want the same freedom as me – whether, indeed, he might not want to be sterilised as well.

I thought it would be a harder step for him than for me. For one thing, he had at least another twenty-five fertile years to my ten. For another, I guessed he might suffer irrational fears of failure connected with the psychological impotence vasectomy can induce. He might value potence above sexual freedom. I began to think that the decision whether or not to be sterilised would rest separately with either of us, so long as both were agreed on the size of our family, and on the question of adoption. If we didn't agree, I'd argue the case . . . *if* I wanted to be sterilised.

As a mother of young babies, I had derived much comfort from other mothers. Our mutual preoccupation with feeding, teeth, gums and sore bums was worth all the health visitors and baby manuals in circulation. Sometimes, a friend and I would confide: no more babies for us! Later, seeing her pregnant, I would reflect on the questionable premise that there are no unwanted pregnancies. Maybe; but a pregnancy is not a baby. I was beginning to understand that people are capable of wanting and not wanting the same thing at the same moment. The trick is not to know what you want, but to want what you want.

By the time I had got home, I had made up my mind. I knew *and* wanted.

Britain although they are done in Europe. The Margaret Pyke Centre in London is evaluating the different techniques at the moment, and are considering a new method using a Hystroscope. This is a telescopic speculum which would enable sterilisations to be performed through the vagina. At the moment there are still problems – the most acute is how to block the tubes from the inside. But soon it should be possible for sterilisations to be performed under local anaesthetic without cutting the abdominal wall.

Complications

1-2% of women who have the operation suffer accidental burning, uterine perforation or bowel trauma.
20-30% later experience abdominal pain during menstruation
10-40% experience increased menstrual bleeding.
A high percentage of women who have been sterilised do have increased menstrual pain and heavy bleeding which sometimes can only be stopped with a hysterectomy. 5% of non-sterilised women have severe menstruation, in contrast to 16% of the sterilised.

Studies of these later complications have failed to explain why they happen. Instead they have been criticised for being "retrospective", meaning that much of the information comes from what women remember about their periods before the operation, and for being based on "subjective factors" like whether women experienced more or less blood flow, more or less pain.

Some doctors blame abnormal bleeding on psychological reactions to sterilisation which could disturb the hormonal control of the menstrual cycle. Others attribute the bleeding to bad surgical techniques, particularly during operations using the laparoscopic method when burning is used.

The Royal Hampshire County Hospital studied the menstrual patterns of women who had had a laparotomy, a laparoscopy using burning and a control group whose husbands had been sterilised. The hospital decided to stop using the method of burning the tubes because a year after the operation 7.4% of those who had had a laparoscopy with cauterisation needed hysterectomies to stop excess bleeding compared with 5.4% of those who had laparotomy against only 1.4% of those whose husbands had been sterilised. It has been suggested that the burning technique used with laparoscopy could more easily damage the ovary's blood supply affecting hormone production leading to menstrual problems.

But whatever is going on, it is clear that sterilisation like all other birth control methods has liabilities and is certainly not the casual "band-aid" surgery it has been held out to be.

Would he?

As it turned out: yes. He would rather not consider sterilisation for himself – my guess about his fears of vasectomy had been correct. He had felt that my own sterilisation was a personal question that should be introduced only by me. When I asked whether he thought my infertility might reduce his sexual pleasure, I was taken aback by his answer. He dreaded conception as much as me. The experience of caring for two babies had resulted in the worst two years of his life – much as he loved the little buggers – and the older they got, the more he was pleased. Let us not repeat the exercise.

"What about it then?" I asked.

"Only you can decide."

"Well I *know*."

"Curious, isn't it, that our considered decisions result in acts of termination?"

That thought had occurred to me. It occurred to me, too, how little we *had* actively 'considered' our decision – and I worried whether it hadn't all been a little too easy: whether there might not be problems we were blocking out. Since my first confinement, my responses to birth and death had shaken me with their unexpected violence – there was no way of predicting what my response to this act might be. I just had a gut feeling that our decision was right.

I also felt foolish. I hadn't known my husband that well, after all. He had never given any hint of his feelings about those two 'worst years'. Maybe, if we had no more babies, we'd find some time to talk.

The ease of our deciding was followed by a smooth passage to the operating table. We called in our GP, sat him in a nappy-hung chair, offered him a glass of borrowed sherry and formally requested a laparoscopy on the NHS (at thirty-three I was two years too young to be automatically eligible). The doctor pointed out the irreversibility of tying the tubes: "they cannot be untied". He also pointed out the simplicity of the operation. "Think it over for two more weeks. Then if it's OK by you it's OK by me."

I didn't think it over. I had already done that, and I felt no fear. I felt a sense of privilege, made ludicrous because of the chance element. Had we lived in Birmingham, or another part of London . . . had we seen a less sympathetic GP . . . had we been US citizens, the operation would have been too costly to suit our hand-to-mouth mode of living. We would have muddled through. Had we been Third World citizens the operation might well have been forced on either of us. On a global scale, we live in the right street. Crazy.

Apart from an uneasy gratitude that things for me were so easy, I felt shame. I knew women who could not conceive, and I had a friend whose son had died in an accident. To them in my mind I cried "I'm sorry". Sometimes I still feel that shame.

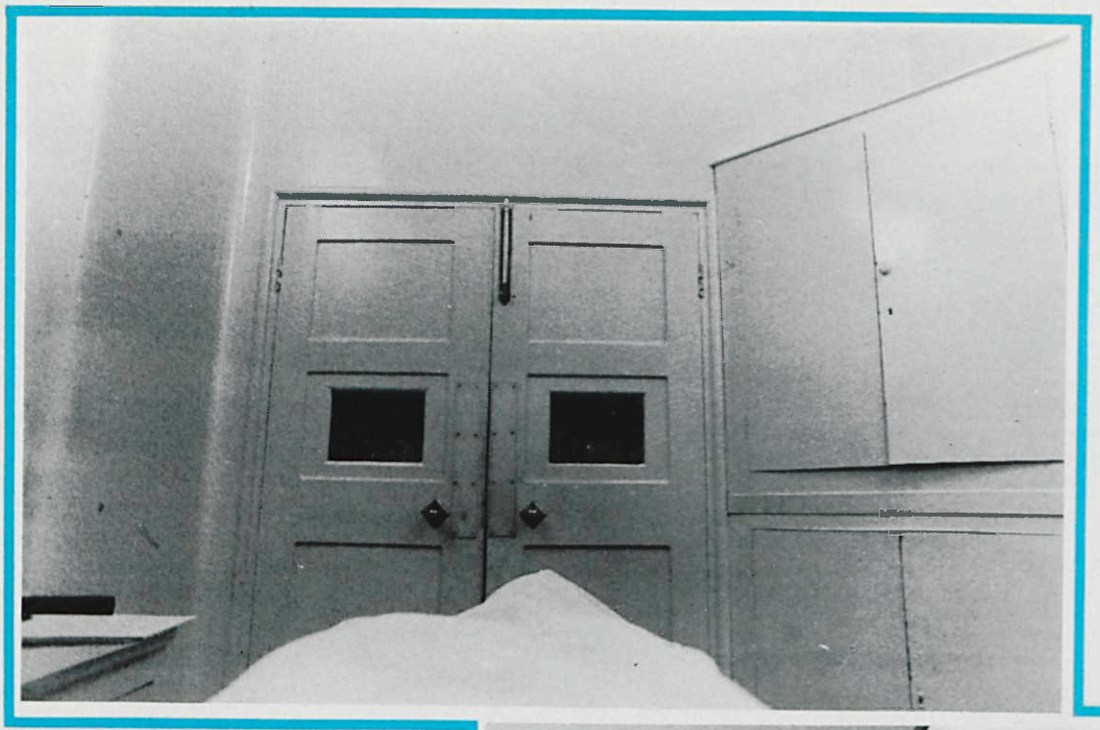
Two weeks later I contacted our GP, and three months after that I went into hospital. It was the usual National Health Service service. A big ward in a London teaching hospital, businesslike nurses (no pain, no serious sickness here). Doctors OK – pushed for time. 1970s hygiene in a Victorian atmosphere of white tiles and overcrowding. Someone came and brutally shaved off my pubic hair, promoting the inevitable rash. Someone brought a form on which I signed my fertility away, and then my husband's signature was required. Surges of irritation: but I wanted the thing done.

The needle. That bit always terrifies. You send yourself to oblivion. Will you wake up and if you do, will it be too soon? Which would be worse and what, but if and . . . nd . . . ddd . . . Mrs Cowen? Mrs Cowen!!! Funny . . . someone's calling my name. Slapping my cheek, too . . . rather hard. Really dreadfully hard but I feel no pain . . . to sleep again.

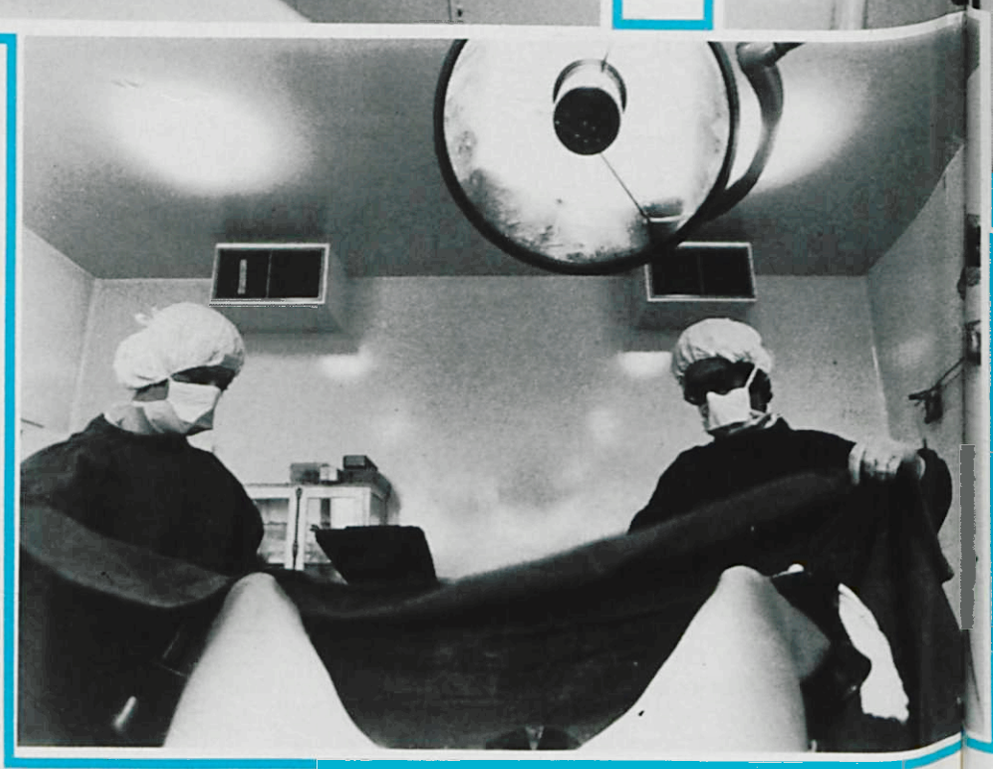
Coming out, forty-eight hours later, was an anticlimax. I brought home no baby. I had foiled no threat to my health. There was not the instant relief, nor even the sense of loss, that an abortion can bring. I had nothing to show but a few nasty-looking stitches which my GP, a week later, had difficulty in getting out. It was a non-event.

Sterilisath

Sally Greenhill takes pho



Sally waits in the operating theatre ante-room



Her legs up in stirrups, Sally is covered by a sterilised sheet with a hole in the middle

I had prepared myself for the operation by telling my friends what we had decided in case anyone had new thoughts to offer for or against. Most people, men and women, thought this would be too final an act for them. No one disapproved. The most enthusiastic were two friends who'd had the operation a year before. They told me it would be very easy, that I'd walk home afterwards, and that I'd have no regrets. It wasn't quite that easy, because I stopped breathing under the anaesthetic in response to one of the muscle-relaxant drugs – hence the face-slapping. Maybe that is why, for days after, I felt so physically drained. After that I felt fine – and true enough, I felt no regrets. The only change in me was a kind of "deja-vu" sensation which for a few months occurred after love-making. I felt a surge of intellectual relief alongside the physical relief. It seemed as if the old, unconscious fears of pregnancy had now to surface in order to be ousted by new, conscious notions of safety. It was as if my body were heaving a sigh of thanks.

The final curtain was brought down by our telling our parents what we had done. They were dismayed, but there was no point in arguing after the bird, so to speak, had flown. They were surprised that we would not be "trying for a boy". Actually I would love to have had a boy; to experience children of both sexes must be an added enrichment.

That was six years ago, and I have forgotten what it was like to grub around with caps and creams. For me, sterilisation has really worked. Sometimes our friends who have chosen to remain childless, and who are considering sterilisation, ask me about my reactions, and I tell them. But it is difficult to discuss with women who are in a different position from mine when I had the operation. I try to explain that children changed my life for the better, but that not everyone's life would be so changed. The same should be said of sterilisation.

Another thing I've learned, and perhaps the most important for me, is that you cannot change old attitudes by making one sweeping statement or by a single positive act. This evening when I walked to the shops with my husband for a loaf of bread the shopkeeper gave the loaf to me, and took the money from him. And I still feel envy when I see my neighbour with her baby son.

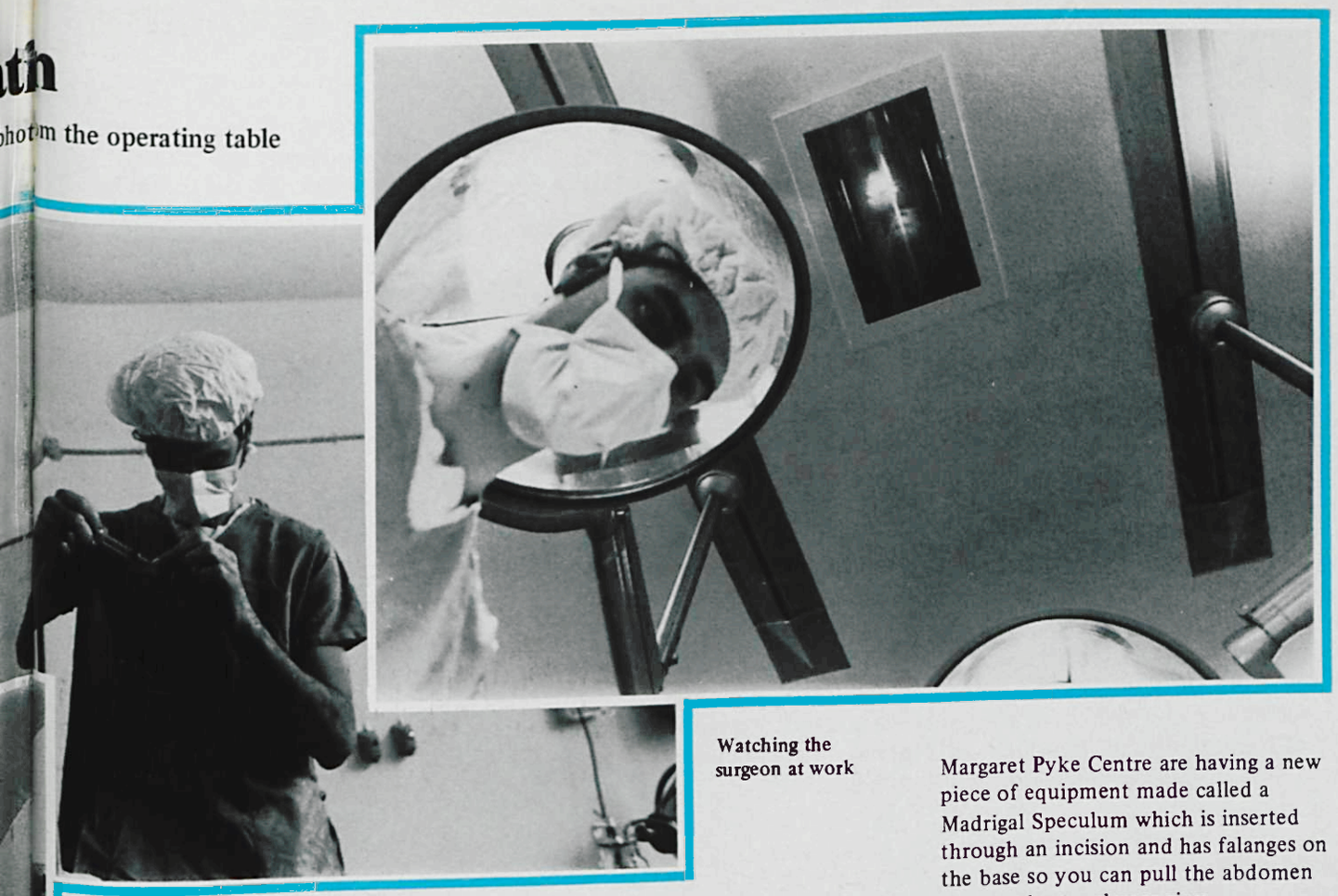
Where

There are alternatives if you are prepared to pay. The Marie Stopes Clinic in London provides out-patients minilaparotomies for £65, and here Maggie Devany describes how she used the British Pregnancy Advisory Service in Leeds.

I had been on the pill for seven years – since I had had a baby when I was 18 – and I was beginning to feel a bit agitated about the long term effects of non-stop Pill popping. I tried for two years to have a sterilisation done but met with nothing but patronising remarks from doctors at family planning clinics, "Don't you think you're a bit young, love?" "Won't your husband

ıth

photm the operating table



Watching the surgeon at work

Filling the hypodermic needle with local anaesthetic

have a vasectomy, dear?" I just didn't seem to be able to get it through to them that I meant business, and that I wanted to have complete control of my own ability (or nonability) to reproduce. We had known since our son was around two that we did not want any more children.

I saw an advertisement in *Spare Rib* for BPAS who, among other things, perform sterilisations. I rang them and they sent me details of the operation. We got an appointment at their Leeds clinic to see a referring doctor (this cost £8.00). He was very understanding and explained the procedure thoroughly, including stressing the fact that we should consider it irreversible. After a short chat he was convinced that it was what we wanted, and said we could go ahead.

I was booked into the Merseyside Nursing Home and had the operation performed for £57.00. It was a mini-laparotomy with a general anaesthetic. Laparoscopies are more expensive because of the equipment required. I shared the room with another woman who was 28, divorced with no children. She also had no trouble getting the operation. For me the worst part was coming home by myself on the train only 48 hours after the operation.

Photographer Sally Greenhill wanted to be sterilised under a local anaesthetic.

The Margaret Pyke Centre in London referred her to the Soho Hospital for women where she took her camera into the operating theatre.

I had a sterilisation by minilaparotomy under a local anaesthetic. The local was at my own request – general anaesthetics make me ill and I dislike the feeling of a gap in my life. The consultant at the Margaret Pyke Centre absolutely agreed that it is always sense to avoid general anaesthetics, he added that a general anaesthetic is usually used in this country because Western women are considered less stoical than their Eastern sisters.

In the event the whole thing was a good deal more painful than I expected, and lasted a good deal longer – about half an hour. It wasn't the cut in the abdomen or the clipping of the tubes that was the problem but the moving of the bowel to reach the tubes. In my case it was intruding and tensing up because of the pain. And there was the fact that I have a retroverted womb which meant raising the uterus manually to reach the tubes. The bowel problem could have been avoided by pumping carbon dioxide into the abdomen as they do with laparoscopy but this has its dangers (adhesions inside the abdomen and technical failure of the complicated and expensive equipment). Partly as a result of my too painful operation the Margaret Pyke Centre are having a new piece of equipment made called a Madrigal Speculum which is inserted through an incision and has falanges on the base so you can pull the abdomen away and get a clearer view.

I had overlooked the fact that any abdominal operation is always pretty heavy. I was expecting to be back to normal after a couple of days but I was knocked out for a week.

One other point, I didn't want my husband to have a vasectomy because who knows how our lives might be different in ten years time, whereas I was absolutely certain that I didn't want any more children. I have had no adverse effects either mentally or physically; in fact my sexual drive has definitely improved now that I have come off the pill which does happen with some people.

I *think* I would have the same method of sterilisation again. I'm certain that I would if I could be certain I was a normal case, but you can't tell in advance. ●

We are planning an article on women who are sterilised against their will for a future issue.

Sue O'Sullivan "Sterilisation" *Spare Rib* No 33.
Karen Wynn "Second Thoughts About Sterilisation" *Sister* 240 Howard Ave., New Haven CT 06519,25 cents per reprint.
J.R. Neill et al "Late Complications of Sterilisation by Laparoscopy and Tubal Ligation" *Lancet* Oct 11 1975.
N.D. Noble "Sterilisation: Laparoscopy or Laparotomy" *British Medical Journal* Oct 25 1975.
Anonymous "Late Effects of Sterilisation Feared" *Medical World News* May 31 1976.
Other articles have been included in The Boston Women's Health Package.
Barbara Seaman, **"Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones"** 1978,Chapter on Sterilisation.

Nursery Nurses write back

In *Spare Rib* 75, women involved in the London Nursery Campaign described the training of nursery nurses, and explained why they believe it is necessary to re-think the training of all under-fives workers. We received many letters asking for more information about the campaign, as well as many criticising and supporting the article. Among the critical ones were several referring to a sentence near the start of the piece: *The NNEB is a registered charity, formed in 1945 to 'train girls of good character but low intelligence'.* Below we quote from two of these, and select some raising other points. **Jill Hughes** and **Myra Garrett**, who wrote the original article, add their comments.

Dear Spare Rib,
As one of the students you loosely termed as 'of good character but low intelligence' I feel I have a right to complain . . . (Louise Loring, Nursery Nurses' College, Bristol.)
. . . That two members of this profession should openly berate it I find totally reprehensible and wonder why they remain in such a 'low intelligence' occupation . . . (Rachel Broderick, Clifton Nursery Nurses' College.)

These are misunderstandings of our quote from the NNEB about nursery nurses — the point we were trying to make was that the Nursery Nurses Examination Board originally thought their students were of low intelligence — *we* do not, and we consider such an attitude to be appalling. One of our goals is to get the NNEB to change its attitude towards students, because it still fully underestimates them, and we were talking about the *majority* of colleges, not the lucky few exceptions. The letters indeed reflect the wide differences that exist between courses:

It may seem unbelievable to the authors of the article, that some of the tutors who teach on the NNEB course actually read *Spare Rib* and thus hopefully are well aware of the ideology that calls for the 'liberation of women and children in our society'. We even agree with it and hopefully reflect this in the course we teach. (Hazel Burgin, Southwark College)

That's fine (in fact, we did say that 'here and there you find progressive tutors'), but elsewhere the picture is bleaker:

For the most part I found the course boring: the college work unstimulating and the practical work in the day nursery exhausting — since most of the time was spent cleaning. Since the NNEB state that "the student should follow the pattern of life in whatever establishment they are placed", students quickly learn to do as they are told, not to argue — under threat of a bad report which, incidentally, is kept completely secret.

And writers also talked about the silly division between those who 'care' and those who 'teach':

Once qualified, the nursery nurse faces many frustrations. If she works in a council-run day nursery, she again finds that a good deal of cleaning is left to her, when she could be spending valuable time with the children. And if she chooses to work in a school she finds herself in the subservient role of assistant, working longer hours for less pay than the teacher. I spent one year working in a nursery class with one other nursery nurse and two teachers. They went to staff meetings — and left us with the children, something the NUT would only allow if we promised not to 'teach' the children while they were away! (Jan Hooks)

And here's an example of yet another division:

I am not an NNEB worker, but have a Certificate in Residential Care. Like NNEB students I attended college for two years to obtain it. My course appears (by comparing notes with a NNEB friend) to have been almost the same — the only difference being that my course was assessed while she took an exam. My point is, that an NNEB qualified worker can get a job in either a day or residential nursery, while I cannot work in a day nursery. (K. Warburton, Tavistock, Devon)

In Bristol, there is an unusually good situation — the one which we are fighting for:

Nursery nurses and nursery teachers working in a school will obviously have the same facilities, holidays and working hours. The qualified nursery nurse is a necessary member of a team, involved in the running of the nursery, a very small proportion of her time being dedicated to first aid or toileting. (Louise Loring)

The London Nursery Campaign is an umbrella group of local London campaigns, all fighting for more and better facilities for under-fives in their areas. One thing that must change if under-fives are to get a better deal is the status and training of all those who work with them. We wish it wasn't true that there are many places where there are negative attitudes towards both the mothers who work, and the nursery nurses who 'substitute' for them, but unfortunately it is still very much like that throughout the country.

On November 17, NUPE is holding a national conference for NNEB workers, lecturers and trade unionists to begin the long process of upgrading and integrating a training programme for *all* under-fives workers. Maybe this will be the start of a new national network.

Meanwhile there are several examples of local groups throughout the country setting up their own campaigns for nurseries and training programmes.* And we have just published a booklet about setting up a nursery (see Shortlist) which people might find helpful — if you're wondering how to start, do get a copy. **Myra, Jill**

* A list of such groups does not exist at the moment and we'd like to compile one as many people have asked to have such information. So if you are in such a group outside London, or if you want to get together with others (nursery teachers, nursery nurses, residential workers, lecturers, mothers, or other interested women), but as yet don't know people in your area write to us and we'll publish a listing.

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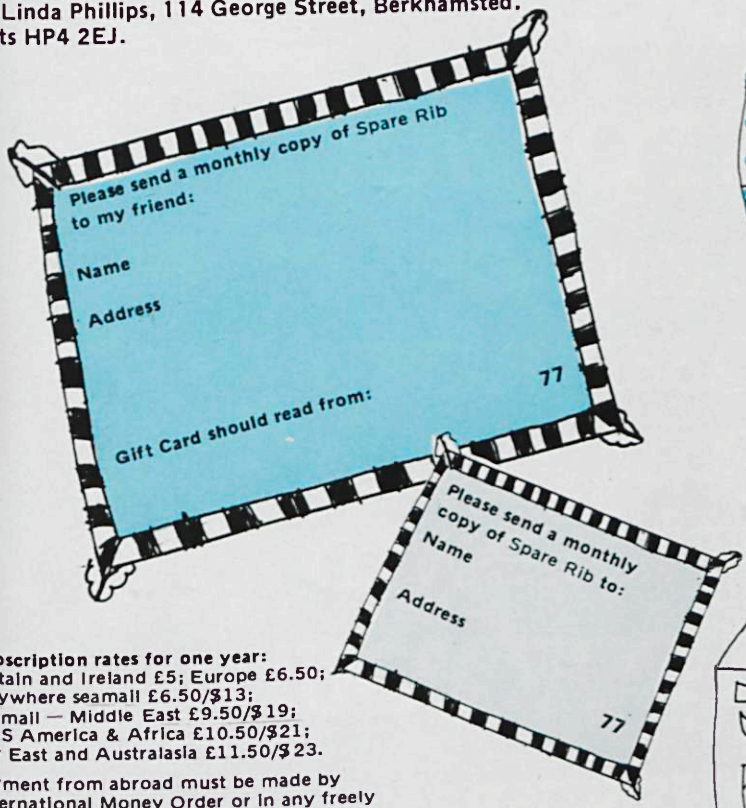

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